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COLUMNS

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SEPTEMBER 2009

CROSSFIRE

LETTERS TO GUNS

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Measurement Woes

I am an avid reader and subscriber. In the September article by Clint and Heidi Smith I read with interest regarding the .338 Lapua cartridge fired by Heidi Smith. I am somewhat skeptical of the numbers about the drop of the .338 bullet of 12" at 700 yards. Is this a misprint? My information on bullet drop of many other calibers at even 500 yards is way more than 12".

Paul Gignac
via e-mail

We made a mistake. It is a nominal 12 minutes of angle drop at 700 yards, which equates to 80"+ of drop instead of instead of 12". Sorry for the confusion.
— Clint Smith and Jeff John

No Assault

I agree with Robert Mead we should not use the term "assault rifles" when referring to semi-auto "black rifles." Heck, I don't even like the term "black rifles." Sounds evil! However Mead is way off base when he says these firearms have been "outlawed." Anyone with a clean background can own full auto firearms. Notice I did not say "weapons." That includes silencers as well. They are Class III firearms and must be registered but many people enjoy shooting them. Tell Mead to check out Knob Creek!

When people make misleading statements like Mead why doesn't the editor correct them?

Roy E Landstrom
Cumberland, Ohio

He's partially correct. Some states kept the Clinton Assault Weapon Ban and prohibit many semi-autos. No select-fire arms made after 1986 are allowed to be sold in the U.S. — Editor

AR-7

In the September issue Holt Bodinson reports feeding failures in all versions of the AR-7, regardless of manufacturer. During the late 1970s and early '80s I lived in San Diego and was a customer at The Old Army Armory gunstore,

where I spoke with owner and gunsmith Tom Fewins. He claimed he had solved all feeding problems of the AR-7 by replacing the polymer spring guide with a steel version shaped the same, which he made himself.

After I read the Bodinson article I found the store is no longer there, and could not find any surviving members of the Fewins family. I believe Fewins had a son who succeeded him in the business. Perhaps if you publish this letter some reader(s) may be able to answer these questions:

1. Do the Fewins family have any leftover parts and/or who now makes them, where can these family members be contacted?

2. Are steel replacements for the AR-7 spring guide available elsewhere?

I. I. Butler
Berkeley, Calif.

Wrong Grip

I have the greatest respect for *GUNS Magazine* and its' authors. When I get your magazine, I read it cover to cover in one sitting. Thanks for a great publication.

However, I take exception to the photo of Massad Ayoob in the article "Back Up Gun Drills." When I teach new shooters, they are told to have both thumbs on one side of the firearm, be it revolver or semi-auto. The photo shows the shooters' thumbs crossed. I do appreciate the S&W 340 is a "lightweight" revolver, but this may show an inexperienced shooter it is OK to use this grip. Thanks for letting me express my opinion.

Bill Smolinski
Stevensville, Montana

I generally agree with you. However, there's an exception to every rule. When shooting .357 ammo through the sub-pound Model 340 — and for some folks when shooting fairly light guns with full power .44 Magnum loads — the thumb crossover grip is the only thing that will prevent some degree of hand separation when the recoil hits a truly jackhammer level. Input appreciated! — Mas Ayoob

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• CLINT SMITH •

LET THERE BE LIGHT And other everyday things.

I have been fortunate to always have jobs I liked all of my adult life. This writing (using the term loosely on my part) is fun and, although I am not great at it, I think most of the time I can contribute something to the folks who might read these columns. In my real work world I get to shoot and teach (using that term loosely, too) on a daily basis.

As an example, yesterday I ran 24 tactical runs, half in low light conditions and the other half in no light conditions. While doing this with students using either handheld or weapons-mounted lights or both, I get to use and observe the use of illumination tools and, without being ugly, I get to see how they really work. Not what the marketing people "say" their product will do, but what the light really does. So wearing our school Armor Express armor and using different lights for both identification and shooting purposes, I get a lot of exposure to what does and what doesn't work. So, for lights, the following stuff works for me and I use it as everyday gear.

I have been using the First Light Liberator system for some time now. Lots of experts have been using the light since it first came on the market, but I used it for quite awhile first before passing on my opinion. I think it is a good offhand and handheld system and, although expensive by Wal-Mart standards, it is worth the money.

I like all the features and can now run the thing pretty good with pistols, revolvers and long guns. I care least about the strobe mode, but the side navigation light and the main bright beam are really good by themselves or used in conjunction with a weapons mounted

light. It is a well-constructed piece of equipment. The cost of the Liberator may be a deciding factor for some buyers, but quality is not an issue and it is top drawer gear.

Weapons Mounted Illumination

There are lots of good ones, but I continue to use the SureFire X300 and I use them on everything I shoot with a light attached. Size, price and downrange light-wise, they are and will be hard to beat. I don't know about beating nails and stuff with them, but used as a light it is a good piece of gear. SureFire is without question an industry icon in illumination tools and systems.

The X300 carries the SureFire tradition of excellence forward with this weapon mounted light.

Tricky Light Illumination

Actually not a trick. The First Light Tomahawk GP is my primary light when I teach because its belt mount allows for hands-free operation while resetting targets, policing students and giving hands-on instruction. It gives a bold light source in case of an emergency and one push delivers plenty of light to get to the main building light source, and talk on the radio, sometimes all at the same time.

It easily converts to handheld when you want it to. There are several variations of the Tomahawk, so review

Good gear Clint uses everyday include (from left, counterclockwise), the Benchmade 5220, Benchmade 580, Benchmade 5270, FirstLight Tomahawk GP, SureFire X300, FirstLight Liberator and the Peltor TacticalSport.





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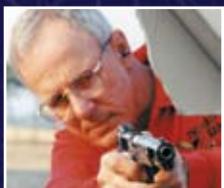
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them all before selecting the best one for you.

Other Everyday Gear

Included here are some odds and ends, but these items still fall under the "I use it everyday" gear category. All turned out to be solid gear for hard-use applications.

Steel

I use a knife every day and always have them available for everything from target repair to just-in-case emergencies. There are a million or so knives available on the planet, but I have and use a 5220 Benchmade Pardue auto axis as my big knife and I also carry a 5270 Pardue, which has the same mechanical operation system in a smaller-sized version. Because both of these blades are termed "auto axis blade systems," I asked Ms. Alicia from Benchmade about a non-auto blade thinking of all of you who live where auto blades are a bad thing ... or so "they" say, whoever "they" are.

For a non-auto but still helpful blade, I have been successfully carrying a very effective Osborne design called the 580 Barrage. A non-auto, the blade of the Barrage still opens smoothly even with the use of my busted up thumb. I like Benchmade knives and I especially like their Lifesharp Service that brings the knives back to service after a rough couple of years hanging out on the range, I just had two knives redone with screws replaced etc. and the service and work was excellent.

Ears

Having lost some hearing over the years mostly when young due to the proximity of big booms, I now like and appreciate the last part of hearing I

have left. To this end I am a big believer in hearing protection and always use Peltors. I have used the regular thin design tactical versions and lately have been using the TacticalSport model with amplifiers and on-off buttons offering high decibel level cutout capabilities.

I like Peltors because they work and I leave a pair in the bedroom if they might be needed at night because I think they could help in a personal defense mode. Heidi often lends hers to students who, shall we say, are hearing impaired and they are a big asset to the ability of people to learn new stuff, especially if the student can hear while on the range working. I like and use the Peltor TacticalSport everyday.

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MUZZLE ATTACHMENTS Redirecting the gas.



This is a truly effective flash suppressor, not a brake. It's a Vortex from Smith Ent. It is amazingly effective in reducing the "signature" on firing and I think the best thing for a carbine or fighting rifle. I don't know how many of you have ever fired a gun in the dark, but it makes the next shot really hard to see for, and it makes anything else really hard to see, too.

Not all AR-15 barrels are threaded at the muzzle. Carbine-length and rifle-length "standard" configurations usually are anymore, and that's because standard form Mil-Spec guns have a flash suppressor in place. If you have threads to work with (they're 1/2-28 tpi) then accessory muzzle devices can be used.

Flash suppressors are intended to do exactly what the name says: quell the fireworks to reduce the display upon firing. The A2 has a solid bottom portion and vents only through its top to direct some of the burned propellant gases away from the underside of the muzzle. This reduces the disturbance of dust when firing from prone. The A2 wasn't really intended to influence muzzle movement.

Being an NRA Service Rifle competitor, I've fired rifles with and without the A2 in place and can tell you there's no perceptible influence from the

device with respect to in-recoil manners. I can also tell you we're firing very heavy rifles. The only times I've noticed a difference that would lead me to suggest having the A2 installed is when shooting off dirt-bed firing lines. No suppressor results in more dust. Most firing lines are concrete or grass.

Muzzlebrakes are a common addition to practical competition rifles and varmint rifles. I don't question anyone who thinks they need a muzzlebrake on an AR-15 since, yes, there is a difference in the muzzle movement on one with and

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UP ON ARS

without. The idea is to attain imperceptible sight movement shot to shot, especially the dot or crosshair in an optical sight. A lighter gun fired offhand, or from a bipod, stays more still with some helpful redirection of gas.

There are several good brakes for AR-15s. I haven't shot them all, but the few I've fired with have all done what they are supposed to do. The AR-15 has so little jump to start with varying effects of various brakes are hard to delineate. Anyone who makes a truly effective compensator for handguns probably also makes a truly effective brake for rifles, and that's a good way to start shopping. The principles at work, and therefore the executions in effect, are more or less the same. I try not to sound like a tourist in these matters, because I know each maker believes his is the best, but I'll say it again anyhow: they're all about the same in that they all take whatever little bit of AR-15 recoil was left and remove it. There's far more difference shown from different brakes with bigger cartridges.

If there's a muzzlebrake installed it needs to be aligned correctly not only with the bore (decidedly a craftsmanship issue) but also about its own axis. A truly effective muzzlebrake can be oriented to nudge the muzzle one way or the other. This can, and should, be exploited. With a right-hand twist barrel, many find slightly orienting the brake toward the left results in an opposing neutrality helping keep the sight still.

I also say any brake maker claiming his produces blast directed away from the shooter should be better (if it works as well as those lighting up the muzzle like a pipe bomb). Again, it's not rocket science to get an AR-15 devoid of enough excess gas, and redirecting that gas to our benefit, to time warp its manners to the pre-fired stage. Oh, wait a minute. It is rocket science ...

A brake uses a number of venturi routes, some can be elaborate and



This is an example of a venturi-style brake — a "clamp-on" for those with non-threaded muzzles. In particular it's a Sommers from Smith Enterprises. These are available in varying inside diameters for installation onto most factory-made AR-15s.



This is a compensator-style brake from EGW Inc. It's short, light, and works. The propellant gases impact the large flat areas and this force opposes rifle movement back and upward. The smaller the hole the more gas is directed to the flats. And, the more gas, the greater its effect. Light bullets show off a brake more than heavy bullets. Reason: more propellant behind the lighter bullet. Shown with a crush washer. I sand them down until alignment is what I want.

labyrinthical, to diffuse and redirect excess gases. They are easy to pick out since they have a "drilled full of holes" look about them. When the gas gets going into and through these holes it's getting stripped of its speed and power and that "energy" is going toward reversing the effects of firing-induced rifle movement. When it hits something, in other words, the gas directs its forward thrust toward forward thrust. That's what offsets rearward and upward rifle movement.

A compensator-style brake is essentially a flow stripper with outlets. The gas hits against a flat area with a small hole in its center for the bullet to pass through (it's like a fender washer). That "impact" bumps the rifle forward. There may be a few of these chambers for the bullet to pass through. These appliances usually have large ports cut in their tops or sides, and that small exit hole in the centers of the flat areas. The ports essentially let the gas out; they don't do hardly a thing with respect to reducing muzzle rise. Some look at these and surmise directing the gas out the top produced sufficient propulsion to push the muzzle down. Naw. They don't work in that way, or for that reason. Hitting the flats moves the rifle forward, pulling it toward the target in effect.

Shamelessplug: Information in this article was adapted from *The Competitive AR-15: The Ultimate Technical Guide*,

published by Zediker Publishing. Glen Zediker has worked professionally with some of the greatest shooters as well as leading industry rifle builders, manufacturers, and authorities on gunsmithing, barrelmaking, parts design and manufacture and handloading. Glen is an NRA High Master in NRA High Power Rifle using an AR-15 Service Rifle. Visit www.zediker.com or call (662) 473-6107.

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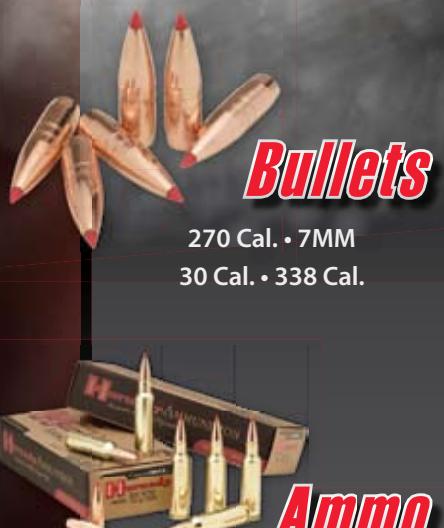
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HANDLOADING

• JOHN BARSNESS •

BALLISTIC COEFFICIENT

There's only way to find the bottom of this mystery.

Many handloaders have a touching faith in the listed ballistic coefficient (BC) of their rifle bullets. In fact many choose bullets based on this number, something at least partly the fault of gunwriters, especially many who wrote in the 1960s, when many writers "discovered" technical stuff such as ballistic coefficient and kinetic energy. As an innocent kid, I read lots of articles claiming BC and energy were the truly important things in hunting bullets. It was some time before I gained enough experience to realize many of the writers making that claim hardly ever hunted.

They were right about one thing, however: A high BC allows a bullet to shoot flatter and resist wind-drift better, though exactly how much a shooter should worry about these things depends on the shooting involved. BC means just about zilch to a woods hunter, no matter what rifle he carries, but it means a lot more to an open-country hunter or longer-range target shooter.

Before World War II discussions of BC were pretty rare in shooting essays, but after the war a whole generation became more technically oriented. Handloading manuals even started publishing the BC's of bullets, though in a rather crude way. I own a copy of the first Speer handloading manual, purchased at a garage sale in Lewistown, Montana. The

BC's listed only go two decimal places. Their 180-grain .30-caliber spitzer, for instance, is listed at .49, a level of imprecision considered inadequate by today's sophisticated bullet junkies.

Actually .49 was probably a guess anyway. For many years listed BC's of rifle bullets were arrived at by comparing the bullet to a "form factor," not actual shooting. Other factors were also often involved in such guesses. I have heard through the rifle-loony grapevine that at least one bullet company listed BCs far lower than reality for their boattailed bullets, primarily because the company president hated boattails. At the same time another company, known for their boattailed bullets, listed higher BCs than actual shooting indicated. Similarly, after

plastic-tipped boattails became popular, one company made a 7mm bullet with a very high listed BC. A year or two later a competitor brought out a plastic-tipped 7mm of the same weight with a listed BC .001 higher than the first company's.

The truth is BC isn't a firm number, like 140 grains of bullet weight. The same bullet's BC varies according to different factors, including velocity. If you go to the Sierra Bullets Web site you'll find a listing of BCs for all their bullets at different velocity levels. For instance, their 150-grain roundnose .308" bullet, meant primarily for the .30-30 Winchester, has a BC of .200 at velocities over 2,700 fps. The BC increases to .227 between 1,700 and 2,700 fps, and to .270 under 1,700 fps.

Their 155-grain .308" hollowpoint boattail MatchKing, however, has a listed BC of .417 at velocities over 2,800 fps. This drops to .397 at 1,800 to 2,800 fps, and to .355 at under 1,800 fps. So the effects of velocity on BC are directly opposite in these two bullets.

Standard Conditions Only

In any such reference, the BC listed is for what's known as Army Standard Metro Environment conditions: sea level, 59 degrees Fahrenheit, 78 percent humidity and a barometric pressure of 29.53. Vary any of those conditions and BC varies as well. Elevation has the biggest effect. The BC of, say, a typical 55-grain plastic-tipped 22-caliber varmint bullet can increase from around .250 at sea level to well over .300 in the Rocky Mountains.

I first discovered this myself in reverse many years ago on a trip to West Virginia where a couple of days were spent shooting "ground hogs" (woodchucks) at ranges up to 600 yards. I'd been shooting western rockchucks, another wild marmot, for many years and knew from experience how much bullets drifted in the windier parts of the Wild West. Well, the same bullets drifted a lot more in comparatively mild breezes in the lower, thicker air of West Virginia.

Temperature follows elevation in its effect on BC. Colder air is thicker, so



Ballistic coefficient doesn't matter at 80 yards, the range of the shot on this Texas whitetail, yet some woods hunters still obsess over it.



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HANDLOADING



The high plains (above) are one place where ballistic coefficient really matters. No free lunch (below). The only way to truly find out how flat your loads shoot is to test them at various ranges.



slows bullets down faster. Elmer Keith used to write about holding for 100 yards farther when shooting at longer ranges in cold weather, but he didn't own a chronograph and the powders of his day also tended to lose some oomph down around zero. Colder air does have a definite effect, though.

Many shooters also assume higher humidity also slows a bullet down, when the opposite is true. Hydrogen is a relatively light molecule, so wet air is actually "lighter" than dry air.

Another factor in BC is the yawing a bullet goes through after exiting the muzzle. Early in flight the bullet "precesses" like a clumsily thrown football, but soon stabilizes due to the spin imparted by the rifling. Before the bullet fully stabilizes the BC is naturally lower.

How long the bullet yaws depends on the bullet itself, the rifling twist and even the crown of the barrel. Some barrel/bullet/crown combinations result in a much shorter period of bullet yaw, something apparently impossible to predict. When it does happen, however, the bullet will shoot a lot flatter than indicated in any computer model. A fine example is my .257 Weatherby Magnum, a Vanguard Sporter. This rifle shoots 100-grain Barnes Triple Shock X-Bullets into tiny groups — and also shoots them much flatter than the bullet's listed BC indicates. The muzzle velocity of the rifle's best handload is right around

3,500 fps, and when sighted in 2" high at 100 yards, the little bullet is still around an inch high at 300 yards when shot at typical western elevations of 4,000' to 5000' above sea level, and only 5" low at 400 yards. This is a lot flatter than any ballistic program suggests, even when higher elevation is plugged into the equation.

In fact, so many variables go into what might be termed "effective ballistic coefficient" that the only way to truly find out the long-range trajectory of a particular bullet in your rifle is still to shoot the darn thing. These days BC is often measured rather than computed, especially by the bullet companies whose bullets probably will be used at very long range. Berger Bullets, for instance, has done quite a bit of testing and now claims its listed BCs are accurate within .0005 under Metro Environment conditions. Both Berger and Sierra are great sources of detailed information about BC — but to be really, truly certain where any bullet will land at a certain range and elevation, you simply must shoot them from your rifle.

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WALTHER'S REVOLUTIONARY SP22

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Imported by Smith & Wesson, the Carl Walther family of finely crafted pistols has been expanding exponentially. The new Walther rimfire lines have been particularly intriguing with the appearance several years ago of the striking, little, laser-sighted P22 and, this year, a complete new line of modular sport and target pistols under the SP22 model designation.

Walther's have always had a special appeal to the shooting public. It is both their innovative, high-tech designs and the uncompromising quality built into them. Few were ever exposed to

the Walther Olympia match pistol that appeared at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and dominated international competition for decades, but imagine the surprise of a M1911-packing WWII GI who first

stumbled upon Walther's double action, semi-auto, the P38. Then, of course, to a new generation, there was the romantic figure of 007 dashing across the big screen with his deadly, little Walther PPK in hand. To many of us, the first chance we ever had to own a fine Walther at an affordable cost was 25 years ago when the West German police released their .32-caliber PP trade-ins to the surplus market.

Strong

With the marketing strength and penetration of Smith & Wesson at their back, Walther's rimfire lines have really come on strong. The most recent SP22 family of fine rimfires in the car world would be called a "crossover" line. Through some ingenious engineering, the Walther designers have been able to take a basic frame and mechanism and offer the consumer either a compact sport pistol or a fully refined match gun and enough customizing options to keep our wallets flat for years.

There are four models in the SP22 series. The basic model is the SP22 M1 (\$399). The M1 is a sport model with a 4" barrel, open adjustable sights and a 2-stage trigger with an adjustable trigger stop. The M2 model (\$421) is similar except it sports a 6" barrel. Either of these basic models can be upgraded through the addition of interchangeable match barrels and auxiliary Picatinny rails.

The M3, featured here in the article, moves into the match class of fine handguns with some additional unique features. First, the M3 (\$485) sports a custom 6" match-grade barrel. In addition, the M3 trigger is fully adjustable for weight-of-pull and overtravel.

Surely the most striking elements of the M3's design are the factory-fitted Picatinny rails extending the full length of the upper frame and from the triggerguard forward on the lower portion of the frame.

"Modular" may be an overworked term, but not in the case of the M3. Using the Picatinny rails or the dovetails



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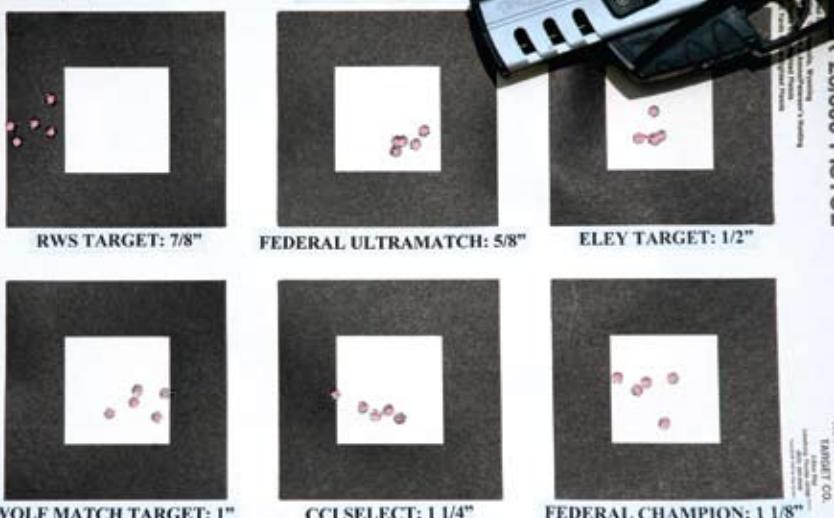


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The M3 proved superbly accurate with groups running 1/2" to 5/8" with premium match ammunition.

which hold them in place, you can add more features, more options, to the M3 than any other match handgun in the world.

Accuracy

Here's what you can do with an M3, but first of all, it's fair to ask, "Does it shoot?" To answer that question, I went to the range and mounted Walther's clear 2x20 pistol scope on the top rail. The range session also gave me an opportunity to test Federal's latest Olympic quality, 40-grain UltraMatch ammunition — an improved version being made in conjunction with Germany's RWS firm.

At 25 yards, Federal UltraMatch, Eley's Target and RWS Target can deliver 5-shot groups under 1" as long as you want to pull the trigger. The accuracy of the M3 can be considered outstanding when, without testing it from a machine rest, it delivered tight, well-formed groups in the 1/2" to 5/8" range. From a machine rest, I'm sure the M3 is quite capable of holding to within 1/4" or less.

The factory trigger was set at a crisp 4 pounds with minimal over-travel. I found it a great trigger to work with, but I would adjust it a bit lighter for shoulder-to-shoulder competition or precision hunting purposes.

Add-Ons Galore

The M3 lives up to its reputation as a match quality pistol, but that's only where the fun begins. The next item I came up with was a Walther "Nanopoint" red dot sight. Off came the 2x20 scope and on clamped the red dot.

The Nanopoint has two settings — an "automatic" setting adjusts the brightness of the dot to the ambient light level and a "manual" setting in which the brightness is fixed. It proved to be a good, little, lightweight, red dot optic, although I thought the diameter of the dot could be reduced in size to some advantage.

I next picked out a Walther red laser unit (they also offer the increasingly popular green laser). To fit the laser to the bottom of the frame, you first unscrew and remove a muzzle cap surrounding the end of the barrel. Then you unscrew the bottom Picatinny rail and slide it forward and out from the retaining dovetail of the frame. The laser unit slips into the dovetail until it rests against the triggerguard. The empty space in the dovetail between the laser

SP22 M3

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ACTION TYPE:	Semiauto, blowback
CALIBER:	.22 Long Rifle
CAPACITY:	5 or 10
BARREL LENGTH:	6"
OVERALL LENGTH:	9.65"
OVERALL WIDTH:	1.5"
WEIGHT:	27 ounces
FINISH:	Matte aluminum, black polymer
SIGHTS:	Open, scope, red dot and laser
GRIPS:	Hi-Grip polymer
PRICE:	\$485 (accessories extra)

body and the muzzle cap is plugged with a supplied filler strip held in place when the muzzle cap is secured. In short, the laser installation is easy and neat. An off-and-on switch is located on the right side of the unit within reach of your trigger finger.

Yes, the M3 does have a set of open sights. In fact, the front sight post is triangular, offering three different blade widths as it's turned. It's a pretty cool design, but the M3 really leans toward the use of scopes, red dots and lasers.

Other accessories an M3 shooter would find valuable were an adjustable weight unit (up to 100g) that slips into the bottom dovetail of the frame, a smaller, junior size polymer grip, an adjustable wooden match grip, 5- or 10-shot magazines, interchangeable 6" barrels, 4" and 6" Picatinny rails and front and rear Truglo sport sights. With all the options for adding or subtracting accessories, you can mix and match and customize an M3 into a precision rimfire

handgun for any imaginable purpose.

The grip-to-frame angle of the SP22 line proved to be excellent, making the Walther a natural pointer. Too, the frame depth of the SP22 series proved invaluable in providing mounting surfaces for top and bottom Picatinny rails. The location of the barrel in the frame also minimizes what little recoil the .22 LR generates.

Design innovation and craftsmanship mark the Walther line. The big, 6" Picatinny rail of the M3 offers loads of options for sighting equipment.

The polymer pads seen midway on both sides of the frame are grasped and pulled to the rear to cock the action which functioned flawlessly over a 200-round test shoot. Just above the trigger is a sliding cross-safety. Added safety features consist of a magazine disconnect and a cocking indicator at the rear of the frame.

The 4th model of the SP22 series, the M4 (\$784), is strictly designed for match competition with a 6" match-grade barrel, full trigger adjustments and an adjustable, hand-supporting, wooden target grip.

Walther's new SP22 series offers something for everyone at a reasonable price, but the M3 is so well designed, so flexible and adaptable to any mission, it's my hands down pick of the litter.

Carl and Fritz Walther would certainly be pleased with the continuing design innovation and craftsmanship so much in evidence in today's products from Carl Walther Gmbh Sportwaffen.

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WWII REPRODUCTIONS ABOUND

Numrich's Zf41 scope & Accumounts' base.



Duke found shooting the K98k with Zf41 scope over cross sticks allowed him to make consistent hits on metallic silhouettes out to 385 meters.

For several years I've been working at assembling a variety of World War II sniper rifles, and so far original American, British, Soviet and Japanese versions have fallen into my hands. The stumbling block has been German ones. Authentic German sniper rifles bring amazingly hefty prices and, besides, fakes are in abundance. Even so I was able to obtain one with reasonable bona fides. Well, sort of: said not due to its authenticity but whether it was actually a "sniper rifle."

That's because it is a K98k 8mm mounted with their little Zf41 1.5X telescope set atop the open rear sight. (A "scout rifle" that predated their debut in America by about 50 years.) The German military did not intend for this rifle/scope arrangement to be an actual "sniper rifle." It was meant to be issued one per squad to above average marksmen for more precise shooting than possible with open sights. Regardless of what was meant, it was actually pressed into service with Wehrmacht snipers, hence my "sort of."

My rifle/scope combination is "reasonably authentic" because both items' serial numbers with manufacturers' codes are shown in photos in Phillip D. Law's book *Backbone Of The Wehrmacht Volume II: Sniper Variations Of The German K98k Rifle*. That was the good news. The bad news was the scope is cloudy, a fact I knew upon buying it in 2006. My intention was to have someone clean it, which has not come to pass. Therefore, until recently this otherwise very nice rifle sat, mostly unfired, in my vault.

Browsing an Internet firearms auction site, I became excited upon discovering Numrich Gun Parts Corporation is selling reproduction Zf41 scopes. Their photos looked nice and the price of \$350, while not cheap was not unreasonable especially since I hate having rifles sitting about unused. I ordered one and indeed it is nice. There are no maker's markings. Surely they're being made offshore: my guess is most likely in Eastern Europe. Again there's good news and bad news. The good news is the scope has great optics. The bad is it didn't fit in my original Zf41 scope mount. The scope has a "waist" that sets into a corresponding recess in the mount, and it didn't by a

tiny fraction. The mount could have been filed but that's not going to happen with it being original and fitting the original scope perfectly.

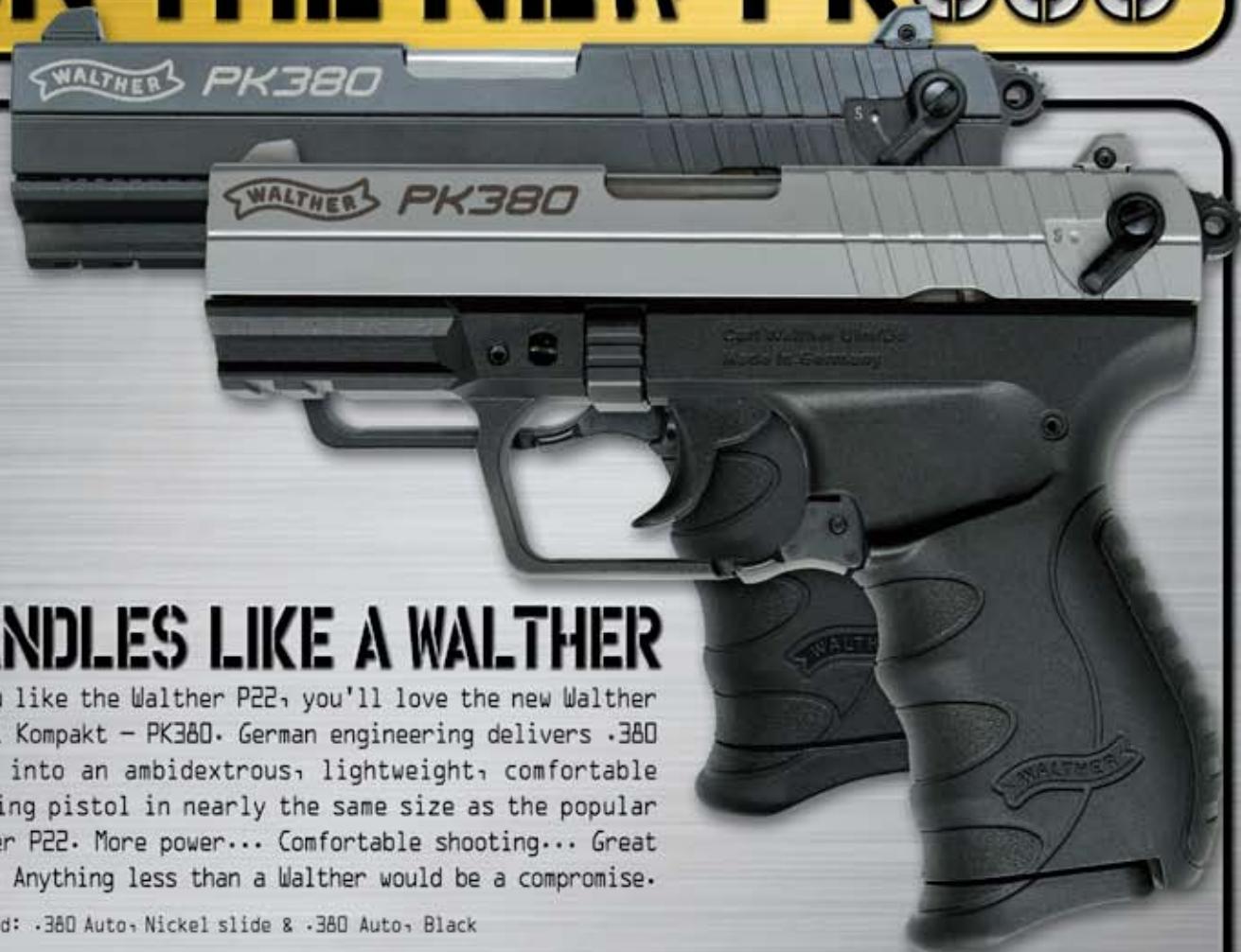
In for a penny in for a pound: so back to the Internet. It is amazing how much WWII equipment is being reproduced and I was happy to find Zf41 mounts are too. They are available at \$249 from Accumounts and the new scope did fit in them perfectly. Accumounts' Zf41 set up comes with an adaptor base so it can fit on regular K98k rear sights (and several other '98 Mausers) without gunsmithing or any permanent alteration. I didn't need that as my rifle's Zf41 base mated with the Accumounts' rings perfectly.

Here we go again. That was the good news. The bad news is Zf41 scopes are difficult to adjust. Instead of the reticle moving up and down and right and left as we modern shooters are used to, the Zf41's move on eccentrics. To move it a lock ring on the fore-end of the scope is loosened. That allows interior rotating drums to move. There are holes exposed in slots atop the scope and correct size plugs are supposed to be inserted into the holes so they can be rotated. Numrich also sells an adjustment kit and translation of the original German manual for this scope at nominal cost. I highly recommend them.

Tough Adjustments

To give a word about the difficulty in adjusting a Zf41 scope precisely, Law's book says the Wehrmacht's instruction to troops issued K98k rifles with Zf41 scopes was not to mess with them. Only "technical sergeants" were to adjust them using a special kit including a magnifying lens mounted to the fore-end of the scope in the process. The problem

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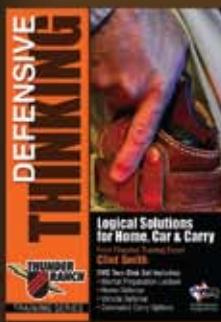
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www.americanhandgunner.com/TRvids.html

is the reticle and eccentrics business. A very slight rotation of the adjustment drums; say in trying to move point of impact a tiny bit left or right is also likely to cause it to move upwards or downwards as the case might be and also vice versa. Eventually I learned to make only the most minute movements of the rotating drum and shoot often — both at 25 and 100 yards.

I devoted most of an afternoon and over 100 rounds of 8mm handloads to sighting the rifle in. That was the bad news. Good news was I finally began hitting point of aim at 100 yards. The lock ring securing the rotating drums was tightened and I intend to never move them again.

Easy Ranging

Now there's more good news and no more bad news. The Zf41 scope is set up so elevation can be adjusted from 100 to 800 meters by a rotating collar on the scope tube. I sighted the scope so the "1" was on at 100 yards. If the collar is turned to "2" hits are dead centered on my steel plate at 200 yards and likewise with the "3" setting at 300 yards, which is as far as I can shoot on my home range. That's using a 6 o'clock hold. I have repeated this process (and in reverse also) at least a dozen times with complete satisfaction. No wild shots, no errant zero, nothing



The Zf41 mounts (above) are part of the rear sight of a German K98k rifle. The Numrich Zf41 reproduction scope (below) in Accumounts' reproduction mounts is mounted and zeroed on Duke's original K98k rifle. Below it is the original Zf41 scope to show how closely Numrich duplicated it.



untoward. My handload of 195-grain Hornady spirepoint over 47 grains of Hodgdon Varget gives about 2,480 fps, essentially duplicating the ballistics of Hornady's factory load with that bullet. It is rated at 2,500 fps. Both loads are meant to duplicate German WWII

military ballistics for at least one of their many 8mm loadings.

Prior to a BPCR Silhouette match a friend spotted for me while I shot the K98k with Numrich Zf41 scope. Hits on 300-meter pigs and 385-meter turkeys were easy. However the 500-meter rams were another story. That 1.5X magnification just isn't enough for 500 meter shooting.

Numrich's (and original) Zf41 1.5X scope reticles have a thick pointed post with not quite so thick cross-wires. The scope itself is tiny at 5-1/4" long with a tube diameter of only .58". Also as with the originals the Numrich reproduction comes with what the Germans called "rain shades" and what we today call sunshades. Scope and mounts add a little over a pound to a K98k's weight, but the enhanced "shoot-ability" offered to my 60-year-old eyes over issue open sights make the weight and expense worth it.

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HANDGUNS

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DOES THE CHUTE HELP YOU SHOOT?

Magazine well “chutes” have been getting bigger and bigger. Where is the point of diminishing returns?

When I was a young puppy of a shooter, the butts of semiautomatic pistols were machined off square to the magazine well. Not until the 1950s, when Jeff Cooper and his circle of now-fabled master handgunners introduced high-speed “combat competition” shooting, did folks figure out breaking the edges of the entry point would allow the magazines to slip in faster.

The “beveled” magazine well became de rigueur, not just because they were seen by famous shooters and by gun magazines as the hot set-up, but because they worked. Just as a throated feedway helped hollowpoint .45 ACP rounds work in a mil-spec pistol designed for roundnose full metal jacket bullets, the more tapered opening at the butt allowed a fresh magazine to enter more smoothly and certainly. Before too long, revolver shooters learned the same principle worked with six cartridges at a time when using speedloaders, and began to chamfer the chamber edges on their cylinders.

The principle worked with either gun primarily because it reduced fumbling. The alignment of the top of the full magazine with the entry point at the auto pistol’s butt didn’t have to be as perfect if that entryway was wider and smoother.

By the way, this is as good a time as any to point out the advantage under discussion isn’t just about reloading. It’s about loading, too. There are places in this world where you can have a handgun with you, but it can’t be loaded. Our nation is also full of folks who live with people who don’t like guns, and have found it a necessary compromise to keep their gun unloaded in the name of household peace. If an emergency happens, you’re already pretty far behind the curve with an unloaded gun, so speed of getting the mag in so you can rack



Approximately 2" wide, this funnel is too big to pass muster at IDPA, but could be useful in other settings. Brass scrapings on Smith & Alexander mag well (below, left) of this ParaOrdnance .45 show it has performed its intended purpose, and guided more than one loaded magazine where it needed to go. This shooter finds a mag chute on his HK .45 (below, right) definitely speeds reloads.



the slide and get into action takes on a whole new dimension of importance.

The Well Gets Wider

One long-standing American ethos is if something is good, more of it must be better. American shooters tried the beveled magazine well and found it good, and it seemed more must, indeed, be better. The next evolution was a flared attachment to the butt wider than any beveling because it extended lower, and therefore could go wider without compromising the structure of the



pistol’s frame.

Over the years, I’ve seen this device in many forms. The cheapest, which appeared in a couple of iterations, had tabs that went under the grip panels of a 1911 with holes that slipped over the grip screw escutcheons. Unfortunately, they didn’t work terribly well. Most users bought them to save paying for a real bevel job, and when they inserted the magazine, the feed lips hit the squared edge of the unmodified underlying butt and still hung up, anyway.

What worked better — fabulously

better — was a permanently installed chute such as the Smith & Alexander unit. The magazine met nothing but a smooth slope on the front, back, *and* sides. To get this effective an angle, though, the attachment had to extend slightly from the butt. Some found this to be a problem with concealment. Some didn't. Some, like me, found it a problem under a T-shirt but not under a jacket, vest, or unbuttoned tails-out shirt.

Because these mag chutes extend from the bottom of the gun, we found we could only accomplish reloading reliably if we had extended bottom magazines. That was OK, because the old flat-bottom GI 1911 magazines had to be pushed in firmly anyway, and a little more push-pad on the bottom aided that. Lots of 1911s now come with mag chutes from the factory. They have carved a niche on the street as well as on the combat range.

The Flower Pot

In the '80s, two things widened mag bottoms still more. IPSC turned into track and field with a space gun sporting optical sights and recoil suppressors the size of some movie "silencers," and



Monster mag well on this Custom Shop XD(M) shows why Mas calls them "flower pots."

Chapman Academy and Lethal Force Institute had simultaneously discovered and broadcast the fact the old canard about the butt of the gun touching the ground in prone position would alter point of aim/point of impact or expand group size was BS.

Chapman Academy was the site of the prestigious Bianchi Cup, its course of fire designed by Ray Chapman himself, with stages where shooters benefited from going prone at 50 and even 25

yards. A mag well attachment truly *humongous* in both length and depth was born, and with the butt flat on the ground, the pistol so equipped had, in effect, a "unipod" support. A pistol so equipped will only conceal under Count Dracula's cape and will chafe the ribcage of the wearer, and clearly goes beyond practical concealed carry parameters.

However, I met a cop in the Pacific Northwest who is a competition shooter who learned to like the concept, and carries a wide-body double-stack 1911 .45 on duty. His openly worn uniform holster holds it far enough out from his body it doesn't chafe him (his vest covers the area that would chafe anyway), and it works

for him.

For those who keep their gun in a drawer, these devices will make the gun faster to pick up when needed in an emergency. Seriously. The flared bottom edge lifts the grip-frame high enough your fingers can more easily slip between the gun and the supporting surface beneath it, for a quick and secure grasp. For anything else "real," I'd stay with a bevel job or an S&A type chute. Those things have practical worth. **GUNS**

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• DAVE ANDERSON •

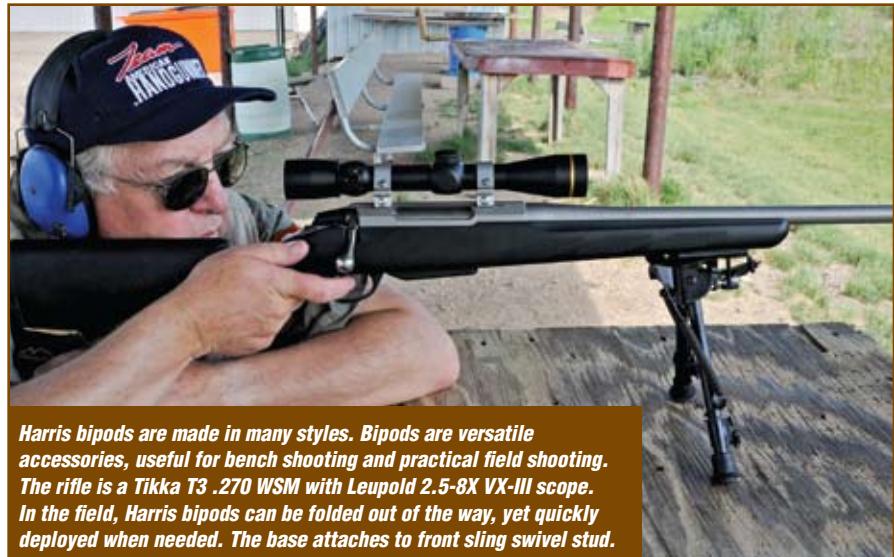
GIVE IT A REST Seriously.

Many a hunting rifle gets sighted in resting on a rolled-up jacket over a pickup's hood. It works after a fashion though the truck tends to rock in the wind or when you lean against it.

Remember the bore is an inch or two below the scope. Just because you don't see an obstruction through the scope doesn't mean the bore is clear. I recall once riding around with friends in an old Jeep. It had a long rusted scar in the hood, a relic of an occasion when some excited hunter jumped out and took a shot at a black bear. The only one who approved of the results was the bear.

For serious accuracy testing of rifles and ammunition you really need something better. I've used sandbag rests made by cutting the legs from old blue jeans, filling them with sand and tying the ends. Not elegant or convenient but it worked, and the price was right. As with most things, you get what you pay for and precision costs money.

Front rests can run in price from 20 or 30 bucks to \$900 and more. The best front rests used by serious benchrest competitors are mechanical works of art, beautifully made precision instruments. Some of the names include Bald Eagle, Farley, Hart, Loh, Mountain Specialties,



Harris bipods are made in many styles. Bipods are versatile accessories, useful for bench shooting and practical field shooting. The rifle is a Tikka T3 .270 WSM with Leupold 2.5-8X VX-III scope. In the field, Harris bipods can be folded out of the way, yet quickly deployed when needed. The base attaches to front sling swivel stud.

Ransom, SEB, Sinclair and Wichita.

If benchrest competition interests you, or if you simply want the best regardless of cost, a good idea is to find a benchrest match. I wouldn't suggest pestering shooters as they're trying to ease off the last shot of a string with time running out, but you will see what's available.

To some extent choice of rest depends how you shoot. Most of what I know about benchrest shooting technique I learned from Warren Page's *The Accurate*

Rifle, written in 1973. Consequently, I make fine aiming adjustments with the left hand on the rear bag. The front rest simply holds the forearm of the rifle consistently.

Currently, many shooters use the rear bag only as a buttstock support and make fine adjustments with the front rest. The front rest adjustments must be fine, smooth, repeatable and precise — and precision, remember, costs money.

Most of us shoot from the bench to sight in, test scopes and rifles, compare factory loads and develop handloads. We probably don't need such precision. On the other hand, we are more interested in accuracy, than the casual shooter who just wants to check the sights on his deer rifle once a year.

For around \$150 to \$250 we can get a rest which will last a lifetime and make bench shooting easier and more pleasant. For several years I've used a Caldwell rest called "The Rock BR" which currently retails at \$219. This model has windage and elevation adjusting knobs. I doubt they are as precise as those on models costing three or four times as much, but for my purposes they work fine.

After getting the rest positioned and leveled (using the built-in bubble level) I set the rifle on the rest and rear bag

Stoney Point shooting sticks are made in 2- and 3-legged versions and in heights for sitting/kneeling and standing positions. They are well made, light and strong. Folded, they can be carried in a web belt case. Components are secured with shock cords and can be quickly prepared for use as a shooting rest.





and use the center post to get roughly on target. I use the windage and elevation knobs to get the reticle settled around the middle of the target. As mentioned I do my fine aiming with the rear bag.

Sinclair International offers an excellent lightweight rest with an all-purpose top. Suggested retail is \$159.95. Another excellent rest is the Wichita Precision rifle rest which weighs around 11 pounds and currently lists at \$144.58. Sinclair and Wichita are highly respected names among benchrest competitors and the quality of their products is beyond question. If rifle accuracy intrigues you, it's worth spending some time on their Web sites.

The Bipod

I always have a bipod or two in my box of range gear. If I get to the range and both good tables are in use I can always shoot prone with a bipod and rear bag. Bipods are also practical hunting accessories and just generally good things to have.

Harris Engineering offers a wide array of bipods. The "S" series rotates up to 45 degrees, making them especially handy for hunting. You can place the legs on uneven ground, then rotate the rifle to quickly square up the crosshairs. For shooting from the bench or mostly

The Caldwell Rock BR front rest weighs 1½ pounds and has useful features such as a bubble level and windage/elevation adjustment knobs. A front extension is for an optional forearm stop. The Versa Pod (right) base attaches to the rifle (in this case to an integral rail, other options are available). Bipod legs can be easily attached or detached. Legs swivel on base to allow the rifle to be leveled. Rifle is a Les Baer AR.

on level ground the 1A2 series have solid bases (and are priced substantially less).

Some of the height ranges offered are 6"-9", 9"-13", 11"-25", 13"-27". Most attach to the front sling swivel stud and have a padded base to protect the forearm finish. If your rifle doesn't have a swivel stud, Harris makes a wide array of adapters. For example, they have adapters for most Ruger Mini-14s, Remington slide-action and semi-auto centerfires, and accessory rails.

Another bipod I use and like very much is the Versa Pod. This is a 2-part system with a base attaching to the rifle (several adapters are available for mounting to rails or swivel studs) and the bipod legs which easily attach or detach from the base. The legs pivot on the base for quickly leveling the rifle if

the legs are on an uneven surface.

Legs are offered in several height ranges (for example 5"-7", 9"-12", 15-1/2" – 23-3/4"). Quality of materials and workmanship is excellent. I first used a Versa Pod on a super accurate Les Baer AR rifle I like to use on prairie dog shoots. Incidentally Les once told me he often uses a Versa Pod and rear bag rest for accuracy testing his rifles.

I see the current Brownells catalog carries the Wichita rest, Harris and Versa Pod bipods, along with the Protektor series of bench rest bags with front and rear bags available in various sizes and styles. Bags for front rests are available in different styles and sizes (for example, for wide varmint-rifle forearms, or



narrower sporter rifle forearms). These bags protect the forearm from damage, let the rifle slide smoothly during recoil and are very much worth their moderate cost.

Since we're talking rifle rests I should also mention the various 2- and 3-legged shooting sticks offered by Stoney Point. I've used Stoney Point sticks in Africa and on North American big game hunts and prairie dog shoots. I've also used them as camera supports for both still and video cameras. There are too many styles and sizes to list, but options are available to meet most hunting needs. Very useful products indeed, light, strong, versatile, and well made. **GUNS**

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Colt's exciting, new, M4/M16
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The Umarex/Walther M4 handles like its centerfire big brother, but is a true .22 Long Rifle.

Since its inception, the M16/AR-15 family of Colts has challenged arms designers to develop reliable .22 Long Rifle conversion units to take advantage of the rifle's .22-caliber bore and the abundance of inexpensive .22 rimfire ammunition.

Colt itself marketed one of the earliest simple blowback units that replaced the 5.56 bolt assembly. Max Atchisson of the Military Armament Corp. developed a similar unit commercially popular

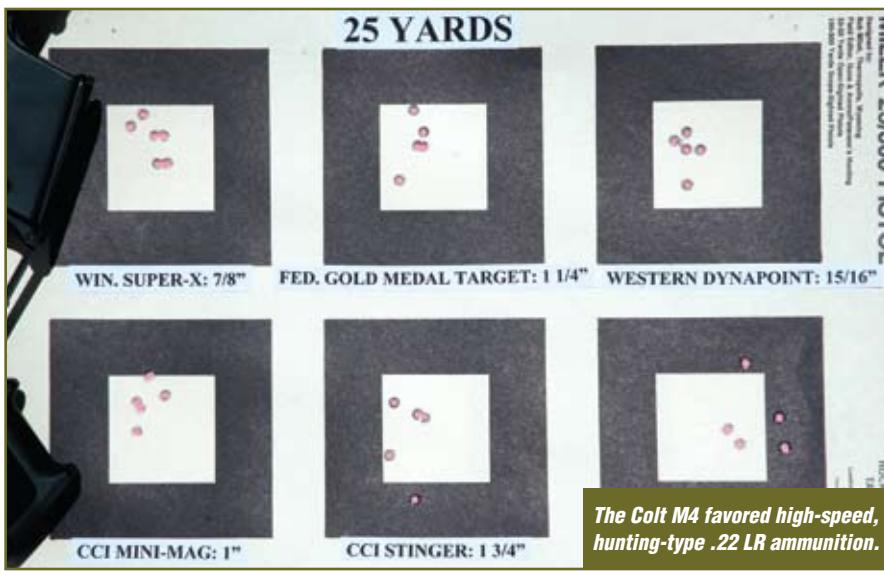
years ago, followed by John Foote of the Maremont Corp., who designed the unit adopted by the US Army as the M261. Only Canada fielded a fully dedicated .22 rimfire model, known as the C10,

sharing 80 percent of its parts with Canada's version of the M16A2, the C7.

Conversion units are handy, but they're susceptible to two problems. First, they are conversions, compromises, not original equipment. The firing system assemblies and rimfire magazines have to be built with tolerances so it will work in all makes of uppers and lowers. Insuring the rimmed, outside lubricated, .22 LR round will feed, chamber, fire, extract and eject in semi-automatic mode is hard enough without building any compromises into the system.

The real killer to the conversion unit solution though has been the change in the rifling twist incorporated into current M16 and AR-15 models. The original 5.56mm round, the M193, featured a 55-grain projectile stabilized in a standard 1:12" twist barrel. In a 1:12" twist barrel, the .22 LR round did fine. When the 62-grain SS109 round was adopted and the rate of twist was increased to 1:7", the soft, lead bullet of the .22 LR proved incompatible. In the faster rate-of-twist, the bullet was highly deformed, leaded the barrel excessively and was inaccurate.

Since then, the world has been waiting for a Colt M4/M16 clone built specifically for the .22 LR. It's here.





Lights, lasers, action! Walther offers a variety of interesting accessories for its Colt rimfire line to create the ultimate “tricked out” M4 tactical rimfire. Note the fake suppressor.

The New Colt Holding Corporation has licensed the Carl Walther firm of Germany to produce a complete line of dedicated M4 and M16 models imported, marketed and serviced through Umarex USA.

There couldn't be a better team than Colt, Walther and Umarex. Under the licensing agreement, the Colt features of the M4/M16 will be faithfully reproduced in a rimfire platform. The Carl Walther firm is world famous for the quality built into all its firearms, and Umarex USA has an enviable record as an importer and marketer for the RWS, Walther, Hammerli, Beretta, Colt, Smith & Wesson, Ruger RAM, Tactical Force and Magnum Research brands of replica air and airsoft rifles and handguns.

The new Colt .22s are available in two models and four variations. There's a standard-looking M16A4 rifle with a detachable carry handle for mounting optional optical systems, and the M16A4 "Special Purpose Rifle" featuring a fully integrated, aluminum Picatinny rail system forming the front handguard coupled with flip-up, auxiliary iron sights.

The second model, and the most appealing to me, is the Colt M4 carbine. With its 16.2" barrel and 4-position buttstock, it's a compact, well balanced superb handling firearm. No wonder it's the hands down choice of our fighting men and women. The M4, too, is available in two variations. There's a standard M4 with a conventional, detachable carry handle and composite front handguard, and then there's the "Ops" version pictured here in the article with a machined Picatinny rail handguard and an A2 type, fully adjustable, detachable rear sight.

The "Ops" is a cool-looking, little carbine with a 4-sided, machined rail system as a handguard you can trick out with lasers, flashlights, scopes, red dots and anything else you can hang on a Picatinny rail. My Walther/Colt M4 is currently in its plain vanilla format so my handguard rails are covered with detachable panels to form a fully rounded and comfortable forearm.

The range of Walther accessories available for the new M4/M16 models

are mind-boggling. There are red and green lasers, compact 4x32 scopes, Xenon flashlights, red dot optics, 10- and 30-round magazines, alternative handguards, buttstocks, sights and even a realistic looking suppressor can, called a "compensator" in the catalog.

Faithful Clone

What I find commendable in the Walther/Colt is its faithful detailing when compared to a real M4 or M16. All the controls and parts are where they should be and function like an original. There's even a forward assist and a shell deflector incorporated into the right side of the upper as well as a functioning ejection port cover. The triggerguard hinges down giving a gloved hand access to the trigger.

The magazine latch and safety are where they should be and function as they should. The 4-position buttstock opens and closes like an M4's. The barrel contour and the flash hider/muzzlebrake are profiled like that of an M4. Made of metal, the Walther/Colt M4 weighs in at a realistic 6.5 pounds. It even breaks down like a real M4/M16 for maintenance and cleaning.

The importance of this detailing can't be overstressed. Used as an understudy to a real M4/M16, the Walther/Colt



The flash hider muzzlebrake combo (above) looks very authentic, even if it is unnecessary. The rimfire 30-round magazine (below) functioned flawlessly. The mag is designed to look like its big brother once inserted into the mag well.



The M4 Tactical Rimfire features a true 4-position adjustable stock.



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Cheyenne Hunter

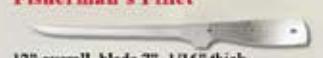


9 1/8" overall, blade 4 1/2" x 1", 5/32" thick.
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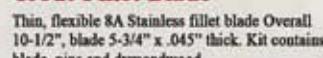
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SS166 Blade Only.....\$12.95
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ACTION TYPE:	Semiauto, blowback
CALIBER:	.22 Long Rifle
CAPACITY:	10 and 30 rounds
BARREL LENGTH:	16.2"
BARREL TWIST:	1:13-3/4"
OVERALL LENGTH:	31.1" to 34.4"
WEIGHT:	6-1/2 pounds
FINISH:	Matt black
SIGHTS:	A2 type rear, adjustable post front
STOCK:	4-position
PRICE:	\$689 (as tested)

.22 LR can greatly assist the shooter in developing and honing their muscle memory so handling and shooting any of the Colt AR models becomes subliminal and automatic.

How did the Colt M4 shoot? Measuring 9.9 pounds on a Lyman Electronic gauge, the trigger takes some getting used to, but when it breaks, it breaks cleanly. Functioning during the tests was flawless with a variety of ammunition. Like a typical rimfire, the M4 exhibited distinct likes and dislikes when it came to ammunition. It favored high-speed, hunting-type ammunition with Winchester Super-X, Western Dynapoint and CCI Mini-Mag turning in 5-shot groups ranging from 7/8" to 1" at 25 yards. CCI Stingers were disappointing at 1-3/4" and interestingly enough, Germany's premium RWS Target brand wasn't much better at 1-5/8". These groups were shot with the issued iron sights having a sight radius of 15". The use of optics would shrink things a bit.

Although I didn't have to use it, the new Colt incorporates an adjustment in the bolt to tune the bolt speed to the ammunition type.

By any measure, the appearance of the Walther/Colt/Umarex M4/M16 family of tactical rimfires is a significant milestone in the history of the Colt AR. During a period when .223/5.56 ammunition is in short supply and expensive, these exciting M4/M16 rimfire clones could not have entered the market at a better time. They're fun to shoot, cheap to shoot, very affordable, and make the perfect understudies to their centerfire AR brethren. Buy them while you can.

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OUT of the BOX™

• JOHN TAFFIN •

THE “EARL” A new mini mag from North American Arms.

For many years I found myself in a situation where I both needed and desired to be armed, but I could not take the chance of anyone knowing I was. My normal dress consisted of a long sleeve shirt, jeans, boots, and a vest, all of which prompted my then 9-year-old granddaughter to say: “Gee Papa, you never change. You are always the same.” In carrying a firearm in that stage of my life I had to make sure there was absolutely no possibility anyone could brush against me and discover I was armed.

I routinely carried either the S&W Chief’s Special .38 or an AMT .380 Back-Up in the top of one of my boots and, at the same time, I had a .22 Mini-Gun in my shirt pocket behind my checkbook under my vest. Not an ideal situation, but it was the best I could do. I would have preferred a 9mm or .45 ACP stuffed in my waistband but there was no

way I could do this. Sometimes we just have to make do.

North American Arms has been making Mini-Revolvers for a long time offering shirt pocket-sized 5-shot single action revolvers chambered in .22 Long Rifle, .22 Magnum, .17 Magnum, and even a .22 percussion version. All of these are too small for what I would



Taffin has chosen Winchester's new 28-grain Lead Free .22 Magnum round for carry in Earl.

call practical carry in a boot, however NAA has now come up with what may just be the perfect boot gun. It is called the Earl, so named for the designer, or Model 1860-4. Life is full of trade-offs and coming up with the perfect boot gun we may also preclude its being carried in a shirt pocket. The Earl has two things normally not found on Mini-Revolvers. The barrel length is 4" and instead of the very small rounded grip it has a larger boot-style grip. Both of these of course add to the size of Earl, which is just under 8" in length. Does this keep it from being carried in a shirt pocket? Maybe not.

I buy most of my shirts at Cabela’s. I like their selection, quality, and price, and they are available in long sleeves with double pockets — actually six pockets. There is a small pocket on each sleeve and the main pockets consist of a large pocket with a zipper closure and in front of this pocket is a slightly smaller pocket with buttons. The separate compartment is just large enough diagonally to accommodate the 4" Earl, and the zipper provides extra security. There is no way Earl will fall out from any activity. Also the front pocket, even when empty, helps prevent Earl from printing and revealing the presence of a concealed weapon.

The basic Earl is a 5-shot .22 Magnum, single-action, spur-triggered, 4"-barreled revolver. There is no transfer bar, however it is safe to carry fully loaded. Most percussion revolvers from the 19th century had a slot milled into the cylinder between chambers. When the cylinder was fully loaded it was then carried with the hammer down in one of the slots instead of dangerously resting



The .22 Magnum Earl delivered fine accuracy. The sights give a very usable sight picture.

.22 MAGNUM RIMFIRE FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
CCI 40 MAXI-MAG HP	1,122	1-1/2
CCI 30 MAXI-MAG HP +V	1,362	1-5/8
CCI 30 MAXI-MAG TNT	1,387	1-3/4
WINCHESTER 40 JHP	1,045	1-7/8
WINCHESTER 28 LEAD FREE	1,480	1-1/4

Notes: Groups the product of 5 Shots at 7 yards.

Chronograph screens set at 6' from muzzle.

.22 LONG RIFLE FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
AMERICAN EAGLE 40 RN	927	1-1/4
CCI 40 BLAZER	919	2
CCI 40 MINI-MAG +V	1,030	2
REMINGTON 36 HV	859	1-3/4
WINCHESTER 37 SUPER-X HV	873	1-1/8

Notes: Groups the product of 5 Shots at 7 yards.

Chronograph screens set at 6' from muzzle.



The Earl (above) is a 5-shot .22 Magnum with a 4" barrel. An extra .22 Long Rifle cylinder is available as an option. The cylinder of the Earl is removed (below) for loading and unloading. The cylinder pin is used to punch out the empties.



on a percussion cap. When percussion revolvers were replaced by single action sixguns using fixed ammunition such as the Colt Single Action the cylinder still had six chambers, however it could only be carried safely with the hammer down on an empty chamber. Earl reverts back to the percussion revolver method and it is safe to carry fully loaded with the hammer resting in one of the slots between the chambers.

There is one other difference besides grip size and barrel length when comparing the standard Mini-Revolver to Earl. The former are mostly point shooters, that is the sights are very difficult to see and use (at least for me). Not so with Earl. The fixed sights are more than adequate. The front sight is reminiscent of sights found on the Remington percussion revolvers being a round post which tapers at the top. The rear sight is a square slot cut into a raised portion on the top of the frame. Trying to shoot 2-handed indoors where the light is not the best results in a somewhat fuzzy sight picture, for me, however, outdoors shooting 1-handed in bright light gives me an exceptionally clear sight picture. Combined with the barrel length, the sights actually allowed me to plink with this 8-ounce sixgun. I can't shoot aspirin tablets or quarters, but no pop can is safe at 25 yards. Try that with any other Mini-Revolver! According to my RCBS High-Range Trigger Tension Scale the spur trigger registers 4 pounds.

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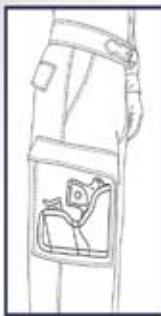
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It seems lighter, perhaps because the pad of my trigger finger contacted the lower part of the spur.

A look at the silhouette of Earl reveals what appears to be a percussion loading lever under the octagon barrel, but it isn't. It swings down like a loading lever, but its purpose is to secure the base pin. For loading or unloading of the cylinder the lever is unlatched, swung down 90 degrees and the base pin can be removed. This base pin is also used to punch out empty cases. The cylinder is then reloaded, placed carefully back in the frame, the base pin is returned to its proper place, and the "loading lever" is then swung back into place. Care must be taken to make sure the latch is securely seated in the notch on the post under the barrel or it will unlatch when Earl is fired.

MODEL 1860-4 "THE EARL"

MAKER: NORTH AMERICAN ARMS,
2150 S. 950 E., PROVO UT 84606
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ACTION:	Single action, spur trigger
CALIBER:	.22 Magnum, extra .22 LR cylinder optional
CAPACITY:	5
BARREL LENGTH:	4"
OVERALL LENGTH:	7-3/4"
WEIGHT:	8.6 ounces
FINISH:	Stainless steel
SIGHTS:	Fixed
GRIPS:	Laminated Boot Grip
PRICE:	\$289, \$324 (with extra cylinder)

Earl is offered both as a .22 Magnum Model 1860-4 or the Model 1860-4C with the latter having an auxiliary .22 Long Rifle cylinder. Having both cylinders increases the versatility of this little sixgun allowing the use of many different .22 cartridges as well as shotshells. Earl was test-fired with 10 different ammunition versions which were equally divided between Magnum and Long Rifle. Loads were fired for group size at 7 yards and I was somewhat amazed at how easy it was to shoot this little .22. Complete results are in the accompanying chart.

Some don't consider the .22 Magnum Rimfire a defensive cartridge, however anyone must admit it is way above the proverbial stick or stone. My late friend Bill Jordan championed the use of the .22 Magnum in pocket guns and in Earl, CCI's Maxi-Mag HP +V and TNT both clock out around 1,375 fps and Winchester's latest .22 Magnum offering, Lead Free with a 28-grain bullet is just under 1,500 fps. I'd call any of those plain nasty!

GUNS



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noun

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2. Mastery or supremacy over another or others
3. The exercise of such mastery or supremacy

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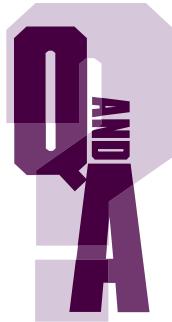
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• **JEFF JOHN** •

Q: I've heard copper removers used to clean the barrel will remove the nickel-plated finish on guns. Is this true? If yes, how do you clean a nickel-plated gun?

Ed Sharp
Woodland Hills, Calif.

A: It's true. *Soaking* a gun in any of the available copper solvents with ammonia in them can destroy a nickel finish. Nickel plate doesn't bond well to steel and is layered over a copper under plate. Given a chance, the bore solvents attack the copper underneath, lifting the nickel.

I use Prolix on my nickel-plated guns

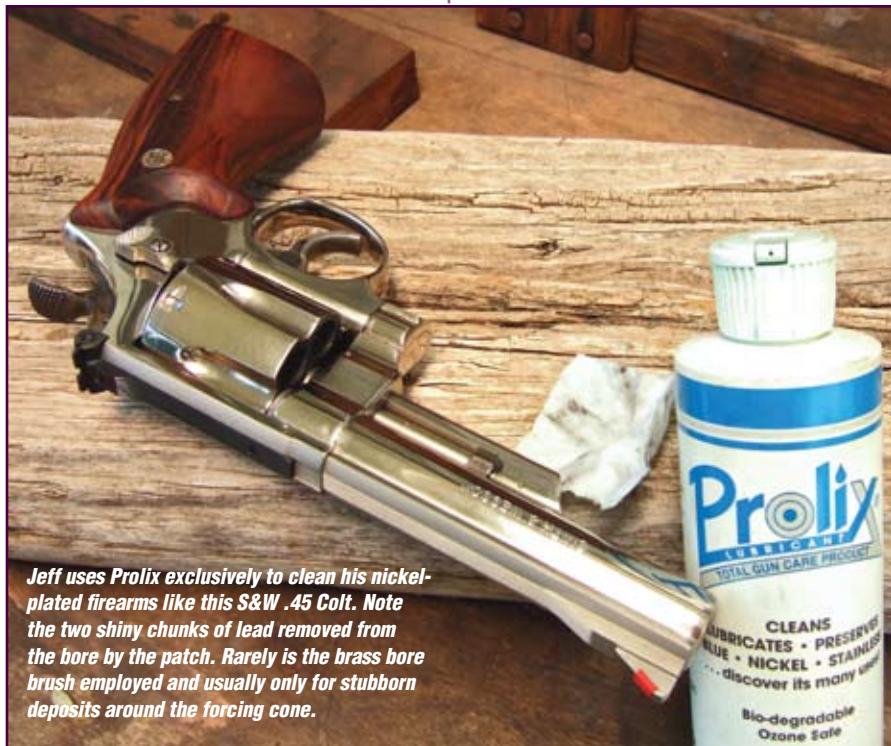
and generally use it to clean all my cast bullet and .22 LR guns, plated or not. Prolix on a tight patch often will lift lead right out of the grooves, too, without resorting to a bore brush, although stubborn deposits may require a brush.

This doesn't mean you can't use copper removers on your nickel-plated guns, just make sure you remove all traces of them before storing them away or you may find yourself in for an ugly surprise.

I don't like to tempt Murphy, so when I clean copper fouling from a nickel-plated firearm's barrel, I use a 1-caliber undersize bore brush wrapped with a patch covered with J-B Bore Paste (Now made by Brownells) and squirted with Prolix.

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Jeff uses Prolix exclusively to clean his nickel-plated firearms like this S&W .45 Colt. Note the two shiny chunks of lead removed from the bore by the patch. Rarely is the brass bore brush employed and usually only for stubborn deposits around the forcing cone.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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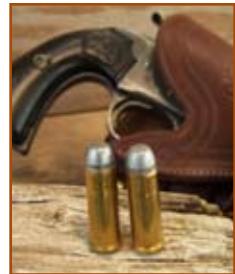
Loading The .44-40

Q: I have an Uberti Colt Single Action Army repro chambered in .44-40 I'd like to reload for. I have looked in several manuals and they very loosely cover the subject as being a little trickier to reload than normal straight wall cartridges. I am sure your great magazine has covered it in detail at sometime or another, but don't know when that would have been as I have only recently become a subscriber. Can you tell me any special details?

James Tryon
via e-mail

A: You'll have little trouble loading for one gun. When you have two or more .44-40s, things can get funny. Just remember to load a dummy round first and see if it chambers freely before you make up a batch of reloads.

My Cimarron has .430" chamber mouths, somewhat large, but it allows me to use more common .429" bullets rather than the standard .44-40 size of .427" or .428" bullets. Just be careful of crimping.



Be careful adjusting the crimp. The case on the left has the crimp applied in the bullet's crimp groove while the round on the right has bulged from the an improperly applied crimp. The Colt Bisley .44 (background) is holstered in an Old West Reproductions rig.

Seat the bullet first, then crimp and check the first round off the press in the cylinder (remove the cylinder from the gun). The necks of the .44-40 are so thin, you can easily crush the case during crimping and bulge the brass slightly so it won't chamber. The brass can bulge if you try and use bullets larger than .429", too, and in that case you should acquire a bigger case neck expander.

Once you add a rifle, see if your dummy round chambers. If it does, then resize brass fired in the rifle and see if it freely chambers in your pistol. If it does, then you don't need to segregate your brass. You still may need to work up individual loads if top-notch accuracy is important to you.

For more information, see the November 2003 issue. John Taffin's "Levergun Loads" covers reloading the .44-40 pretty extensively. More recently, Duke Venturino wrote about shooting and handloading the rifle and pistol in .32-20, .38-40 and .44-40 in the April 2008 issue.

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By John Taffin

Curled warmly one night in my ornate brass bed (which was considered junk then, but now would sell to an antique dealer for enough to pay for an engraved .357), I opened a fresh copy of *LIFE* magazine and found myself glaring jealously at a full-page photo. There was smiling Gary Cooper, sitting in a Rocky Mountain hunting camp, his hat tilted back on his head, his handsome features highlighted by a comfortable campfire. The photo story was about Coop's hunt for mountain lions and what a great time he was having.

The jealousy I felt looking at Cooper's picture didn't stem from the fact he was a little better looking than I was, nor that his hat had a wider band than mine and obviously cost more money, nor that he was chasing mountain lions while I was working my tail off for six bits an hour. The great film cowboy was posing with a revolver in his hand. Not a Colt Thumbuster, as you would expect, but a brand-new, postwar, unobtainable Smith & Wesson K-22 Masterpiece. I would have cheerfully shot it out with Gary Cooper or fought a mountain lion bareknuckled for that gun."

Skeeter Skelton wrote those words in 1976 speaking of the time he was a teenager in late 1946 and lustng after one of Smith & Wesson's Magnificent Masterpieces, the beautiful sixgun known as the K-22. Skeeter finally got his K-22 in the fall of 1948 when I was in the 3rd grade. My lustng would come about in a few years and it would be caused by Lucian Cary, firearms editor for *TRUE* magazine. I was still in high school when Cary did an article on holsters, one of which was a beautifully carved S. D. Myers Buscadero carrying exhibition shooter Ernie Lind's K-22. I knew exactly how Skeeter felt.

Skeeter had his K-22 in less than two years after his search began, however it would take me much longer. In fact, not until after Skeeter penned those words would I finally find my K-22. After waiting that long I made the mistake of allowing Diamond Dot to shoot it. From then on it was basically her gun with regular visiting privileges allowed. On our frequent trips to the mountains I had to buy a second .22, a Colt Officer's Model Special, so I would have a target-quality revolver to shoot. There is certainly nothing wrong with a system causing a fellow to come up with two great double action .22s!

Bull's-eye's Golden Years

The middle years of the 20th century were the golden years for bull's-eye shooters. The typical match consisted of three parts, .22, Centerfire, and .45 semi-auto. Many competitors



The well outfitted Law enforcement officer and competitor of the mid-1950s could easily choose these three S&W .38 Masterpieces (above), all with the same adjustable rear sight. Smith & Wesson offered the Masterpiece (below) chambered in .38 Special, .32 S&W Long, and .22 Long Rifle.



used a Colt Woodsman or High Standard .22 for the .22 phase and Colt's .38 Special Officer's Model Match was the most popular firearm for the Centerfire event until custom gunsmiths began providing .45 semi-autos which could shoot as well or better than the .38 Special revolvers. Smith & Wesson also had a following amongst competitive shooters with their Masterpiece line of matched target revolvers all built on the basic Military & Police frame dating back to 1899 (in fact the original model was available with adjustable sights). Roy Jinks, Smith & Wesson historian, relates 27 of the 40 United States Revolver Association records set in 1913 were made with the Smith & Wesson .38 M&P Target Model. This same model was used by Ed McGivern to put five shots in a group

which could be covered by one hand in 2/5 of a second.

In the 1920s shooters began asking Smith & Wesson for a target model chambered in .22 and the result was the K-22 Outdoorsman. In 1939 this grand .22 was improved with better sights and a shorter action and became the K-22 Masterpiece. At the same time shooters were also asking for a target model chambered in .32 S&W Long and the first K-32 Target Model appeared in 1938. Of course, WWII stopped production of all three Smith & Wesson target models and even when Skeeter Skelton was trying to find one in the late 1940s they were still very scarce. The first postwar K-22 Masterpiece was produced in December of 1946 followed by the K-32 and K-38 Masterpieces six months later. According to Roy Jinks, weights for these three revolvers loaded were 38-1/2, 36-3/4, and 36 ounces, respectfully. Competitive shooters wanted three balanced revolvers so Smith & Wesson began experimenting with the width of the barrel rib and also a heavier barrel on the K-32 and K-38 Masterpieces. By 1950 the shooter could have all three chamberings in three revolvers in matching weights.

The Elusive K-32

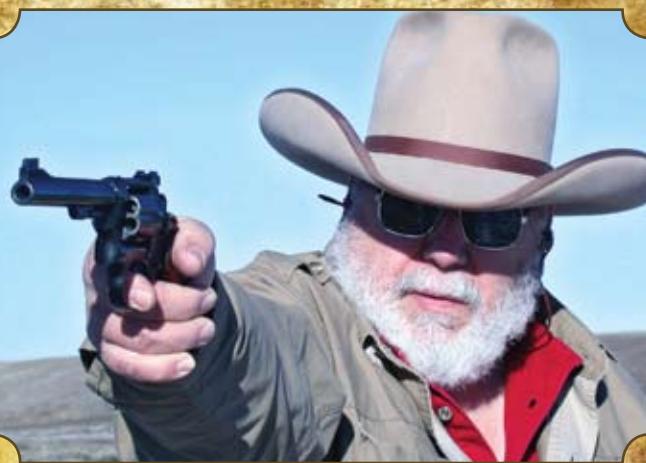
It is fairly easy to find K-22s and K-38s in excellent shape at reasonable prices. I found my K-38 at a local gun show about five years ago along with a companion .38 Special Colt Officer's Model Match. Not so with the K-32 and I had pretty much given up any hope of having one. Then this past year a reader contacted me with a K-32 for sale for less than \$400. I couldn't believe such a thing was possible! Somewhere along the line it had been re-blued, however I was interested as a shooter not a collector and this K-32 certainly does shoot. All of the original K-series Masterpieces had 6" barrels, however Smith & Wesson used the same basic revolvers to produce the Combat Masterpieces with 4" barrels. The .38 Combat Masterpiece was very popular with law enforcement officers and the .22 Combat Masterpiece is also an excellent outdoorsman's .22. Both of these are relatively easy to find but again not so with the middle bore as the K-32 Combat Masterpiece is very rare with only a very few being made.

For the law enforcement officer who also shot competition, S&W offered a trio of K-frame .38 Specials, a 6" Target Model, a 4" duty revolver, and a 2" hideout, off-duty, or backup all with the same grip size, action, and adjustable sights. In 1955 Smith & Wesson took the basic .38 Combat Masterpiece and used it as the platform for the Combat Magnum. Bill Jordan, then Chief Inspector of the Border Patrol, convinced S&W to come up with a .357 Magnum smaller than the large N-frame which in those pre-model number days was known simply as the .357 Magnum.

Along with improved metallurgy and heat treating Smith & Wesson also lengthened the cylinder of the Combat Masterpiece to more fully fill the frame window, used a 4" bull barrel with an enclosed ejector rod housing, and the result was the .357 Combat Magnum now known as the Model 19. Bill Jordan called it the Peace Officer's Dream. Anyone who carried the Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum all day and then did the same thing with the .357 Combat Magnum discovered very quickly how much easier the latter was to pack. It became very popular with LEOs.

In 1957 all Smith & Wessons were given model numbers. The K-22 became the Model 17, the K-32 would now be known as the Model 16, and Model 14 became the official designation for the K-38. I still prefer the original names. Nothing from the hand of man lasts forever in this world and the original S&W K-Masterpieces were all gone by the early 1980s. All of the original Masterpiece models had ejector rods without the enclosed feature. For a short time in the 1990s all three — .22, .32, and .38 — were offered with full underlugged barrels. They no longer had the same grace and style, however, they were excellent sixguns.

Serious target shooters in the time period prior to and after



Old time bull's-eye shooters stood on their hind legs and shot the S&W .38 Special Masterpiece like a man.



John's older K-38 (above, left) shoots pretty darn well, as does the new Model 14-8 Classic. It is easy to see why some shooters preferred the Smith & Wesson K-32 (below).



.32 & .32 LONG FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE S&W 6" K-32

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
REMININGTON .32 S&W 88 LRN	580	1
FEDERAL .32 LONG 98 LRN	600	1-1/8
PMC .32 LONG 98 RNL	682	7/8
PMC .32 LONG 100 LWC	586	1-1/4
SELLIER & BELLOT .32 LONG 100 WC	718	5/8

Groups the product of 5 Shots at 20 yards.
Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle

John's old K-38 Masterpiece (aka Model 14) sold for \$115.50 in this old catalog cut. Note the Single Action target model at the top of the page was actually a few bucks cheaper.



.38 SPECIAL FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (K-38) (INCHES)	GROUP SIZE (MODEL 14) (INCHES)
BLACK HILLS 148 LWC	788	2	1-1/2
BLACK HILLS 158 LSWC	751	1-3/4	1-1/4
CCI BLAZER 148 LSWC	757	2	2-1/4
CCI BLAZER 158 LSWC+P	938	2	2-1/4
HORNADY 148 LSWC	803	2-1/2	1

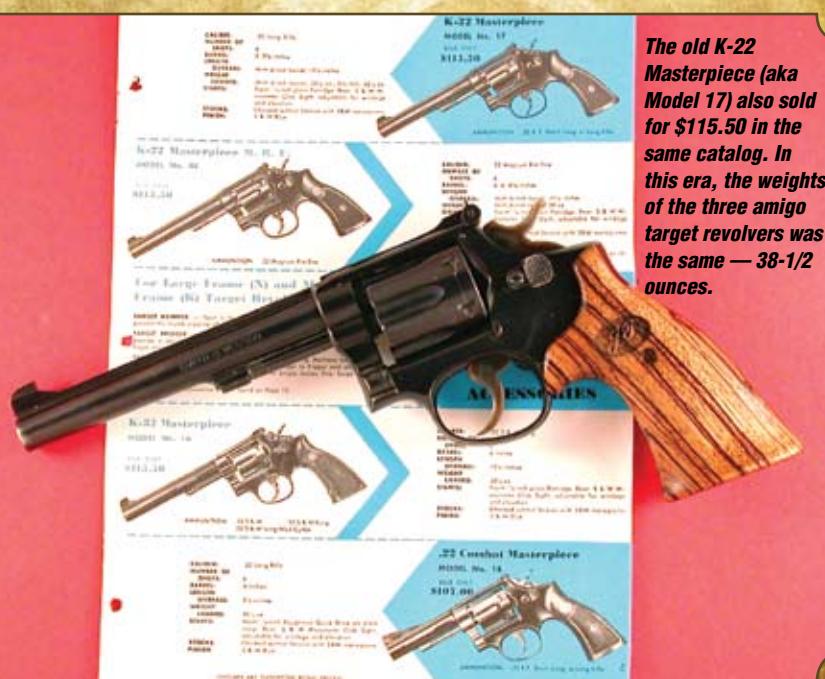
Groups the product of 5 Shots at 20 yards. Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle.

.22 LONG RIFLE FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (K-22) (INCHES)	GROUP SIZE (MODEL 17) (INCHES)
AMERICAN EAGLE	1,065	1-7/8	1-1/8
CCI BLAZER	999	1-1/2	1-7/8
CCI GREEN TAG	943	1-7/8	1
REMINGTON HV	1,032	2-1/8	1-3/8
WINCHESTER S-X HV	986	1-1/4	1-1/2

Groups the product of 5 Shots at 20 yards. Chronograph screens set at 10' from muzzle.

The old K-22 Masterpiece (aka Model 17) also sold for \$115.50 in the same catalog. In this era, the weights of the three amigo target revolvers was the same — 38-1/2 ounces.



World War II often installed custom grips on their Masterpieces such as those offered by Walter Roper. All three of my original K-models have been equipped with custom stocks from BluMagnum. These are known as the Skeeter Skelton Model which Skeeter came up with by slightly modifying Roper's original design. Tedd Adamovich of BluMagnum crafted three matching pairs of K-stocks for the Masterpieces using three different woods and all with my initials carved in the top of one panel. The K-38 now wears BluMagnum stocks carved out of canary wood, the K-32 is adorned with beautifully grained rosewood, and the K-22 carries stocks made up of the most ornate beautifully grained zebra I have ever encountered. Not only do these stocks dress up each individual sixgun, they also fill the hand much better than factory stocks and, most importantly, they help me shoot better.

The original Masterpiece revolvers all disappeared more than 25 years ago, however thanks to Smith & Wesson's line of Classic sixguns many of the old designs are back. Last year both the .44 Special and .45 Colt were made available in the old 1950 Target style and now this year the Masterpieces are back — well, at least two of them. Smith & Wesson has resurrected both the K-22 and the K-38 and they are known officially as the Model 17-9 and Model 14-8 respectively. Both revolvers have 6" barrels and are finished in Bright Blue. Except for chambering and weight both revolvers are basically identical. The .38 Special version weighs 35 ounces while the .22 comes in at 40 ounces. Sights are a fully adjustable Smith & Wesson rear sight matched up with a Patridge post on a ramp base. Both sights are square and black as they should be. Triggers are smooth and standard size while the hammers spurs are target style with checkering that does not irritate the thumb during long shooting sessions.

The .38 Special version has a barrel/cylinder gap of .005" and a single action trigger pull of 4 pounds while measuring the .22 reveals an almost imperceptible .001" barrel/cylinder gap and a trigger pull of 5-1/2 pounds. Obviously both revolvers will benefit by the master touch of a sixgunsmith who can bring both trigger pulls down to about 3 pounds. Factory stocks are patterned somewhat after the original Magna stocks found on so many S&W revolvers throughout most of the 20th century. However, they don't quite fit my hand, let me rephrase that, they don't feel like original S&W Magna grips and so they were both replaced by diamond checkered versions from my parts box. Both revolvers need custom stocks which are only a wood chisel away at BluMagnum.

Both Classic K revolvers were test-

CLASSIC K-22 MODEL 17-9

MAKER: SMITH & WESSON
2100 ROOSEVELT AVENUE
SPRINGFIELD MA 01104
(800) 331-0852
WWW.SMITH-WESSON.COM

ACTION:	Double action revolver
CALIBER:	.22 Long Rifle
CAPACITY:	6
BARREL LENGTH:	6"
OVERALL LENGTH:	11-1/4"
WEIGHT:	40 ounces
FINISH:	Bright Blue
SIGHTS:	Fully adjustable rear, Patridge front
GRIPS:	Checkered walnut
PRICE:	\$1,051

CLASSIC K-38 MODEL 14-8

MAKER: SMITH & WESSON
2100 ROOSEVELT AVENUE
SPRINGFIELD MA 01104
(800) 331-0852
WWW.SMITH-WESSON.COM

ACTION:	Double action revolver
CALIBER:	.38 Special
CAPACITY:	6
BARREL LENGTH:	6"
OVERALL LENGTH:	11-1/4"
WEIGHT:	35 ounces
FINISH:	Bright Blue
SIGHTS:	Fully adjustable rear, Patridge front
GRIPS:	Checkered walnut
PRICE:	\$995

fired alongside my original K-Models. Sometimes the old sixgun shot best and other times the new came out on top as can be seen in the accompanying data. What was most surprising to me is the fact my newly acquired K-32 outshot all four as well as a Colt Officers Model .38 Special. I hope Smith & Wesson brings back a K-32 version, perhaps even one chambered in the new .327 Federal.

Shooting the K-Masterpieces is pure pistol pleasure. Everyone knows "you can't go back" is a given, however, Classic sixgun resurrections from Smith & Wesson at least give us the opportunity to catch a little bit of the past. In fact it is almost a spiritual experience sixgun-style. Time is shackled for an instant and I am around that Rocky Mountain campfire with Coop and Skeeter and Lucian Cary and Ernie Lind. Even the dogs are lying by the fire soaking up the heat and dreaming of the big cat they will tree tomorrow. It is hard to find anything wrong with sixguns capable of performing such magic.

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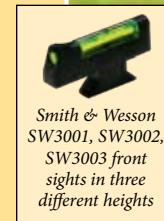
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A TOUCH OF THE MASTER

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY CUSTOM SHOP XD(M) 9MM.

Massad Ayoob Photos: Chuck Pittman

Springfield Armory's XD line of polymer frame, striker-fired service pistols has proven hugely successful in this country, and the firm recently introduced a more highly evolved version, the XD(M). The "M" in its title stands for more capacity, more accuracy, and perhaps even more value. It also stands for Modularity, being the first of its particular breed to get the interchangeable backstrap feature proven so useful on many other polymer auto pistols.

The "more accuracy" promise comes from a match-grade barrel, which Dave Williams tells me is coming off a special production line in Croatia. Dave is head of the Springfield Armory Custom Shop, and a recipient of the Pistolsmith of the Year award, and knows whereof he

speaks. He and his team at the Geneseo, Illinois, factory have turned their attention to the XD series with the same skills that have made their work on the company's traditional 1911 pistols so well respected. Dave sent a customized XD(M) in 9mm to us for a look-see.

The original order was for a Custom with a trigger job including an overtravel stop, Dawson adjustable rear sights and fiber optic front, a Springfield Custom match barrel, an extended magazine release and the usual two magazines per pistol. The package came in at a price tag of \$1,295, including the standard heavy-duty polymer carry case (an excellent piece of kit), and serviceable XD Gear polymer holster and double magazine pouch. We ended up going with a PistolGear enhanced magazine well, which added another \$175, and a couple more magazines with Arredondo extended bases. This brought the total tally into the \$1,500 range.

That's not a bad price for a custom gun with a match-grade barrel and a finely tuned trigger system. But the value is in the performance, so off to the range we went.

First, think "buckets of bullets." The long double-stack magazine of the XD(M) in 9mm will hold 19 rounds in its standard configuration. With the Arredondo extension, I was able to get 22 9mm cartridges in the magazine, and in either case you get to start off with one more in the chamber. That's a fairly serious round count for a belt gun.

I handed this gun around to shooters ranging in age from 21 to 74, encompassing male and female, and small to very large hand sizes. Everyone seemed to like the little beast. Ergonomics is where the basic XD concept shines, and the excellent trigger reach and the superior gripping surface afforded by the "M" treatment just seems to all come together.

Even though the test came smack in the middle of The Great Ammo Drought of 2009, all who participated in testing were able to find enough ammo to put through this pistol to get the feel of it. No one disliked it as a fun gun. Most, however, thought the trigger pull had come through too light for defensive use. On the Lyman digital scale, pull weight averaged 3.2 pounds when weighed at the toe of the trigger, and 3.5 at the center. The latter position is where the trigger finger usually rests.



Some of our shooters, especially those with smaller hands, found the extended mag release button on the left side to be particularly endearing. However, one other shooter and I found it to protrude too far for our hand size and/or shooting style, leading to the occasional inadvertent mag drop. That “extended release button” thing can occur with any pistol so modified. Since the XD series all have ambi mag releases, I find it easier to hit the small button on the starboard side with my trigger finger anyway, and therefore don’t need a longer button on the port side of the frame.

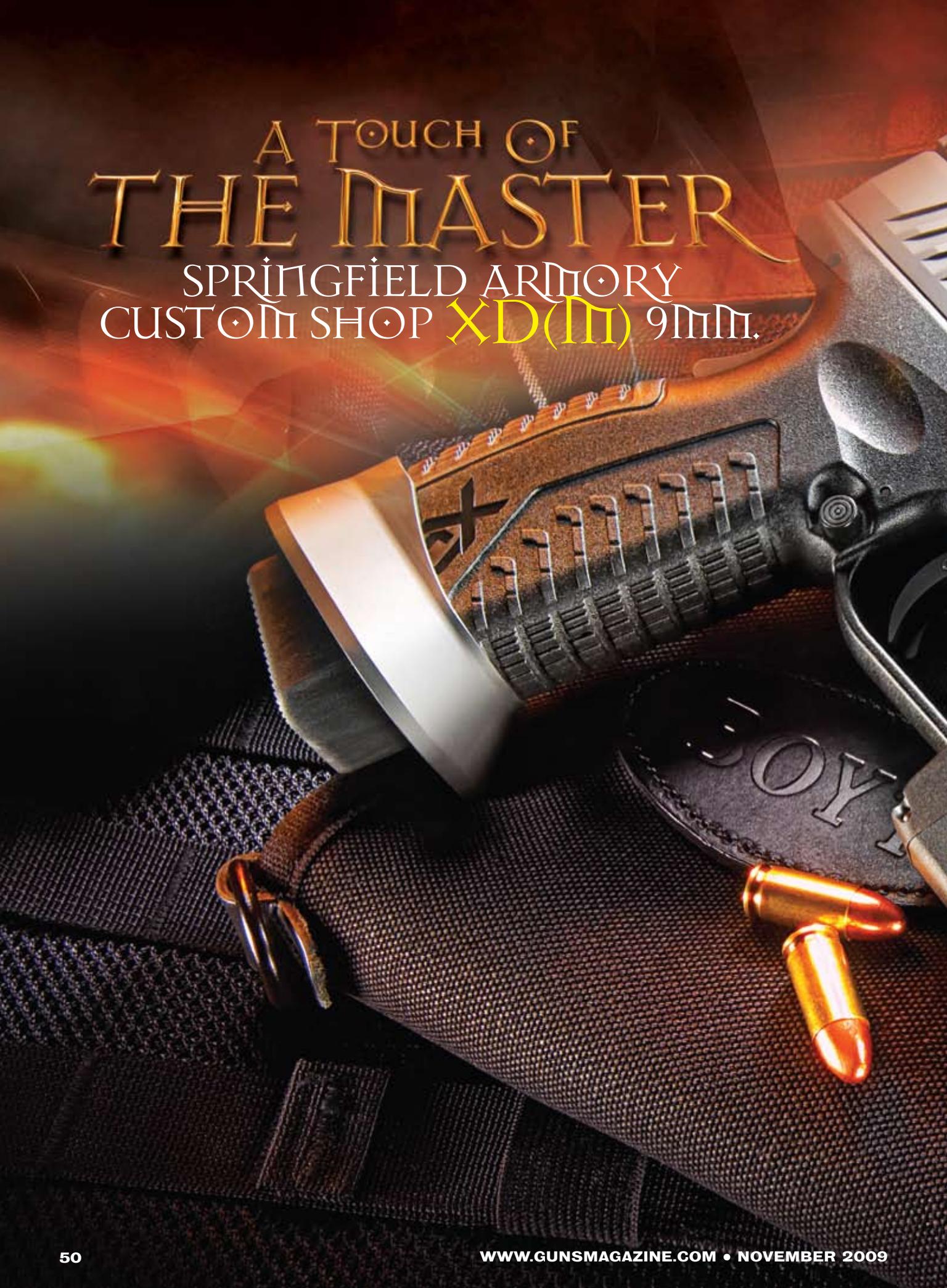
Reliability was 100 percent with factory ammo. There was one failure to feed with a handload, but it turned out to have been improperly crimped and would have jammed in anything. I didn’t have access to a proper benchrest for three of the four weeks I had the gun (and was too busy to use the bench during the four days I did have access to one), so accuracy testing was done informally from prone position at 25 yards. Five-shot groups were sometimes under 2" (hint: the test pistol liked 147-grain 9mm subsonic) and never went bigger than a little over 3". “Best three clusters” within those 5-shot groups occasionally went under an inch, an indication of splendid mechanical accuracy potential if unnoticed human error doesn’t interfere. It shot better for me than the standard XD(M) and should, because Williams and his team take oversize barrels and “hard fit” them specifically to these Custom guns.

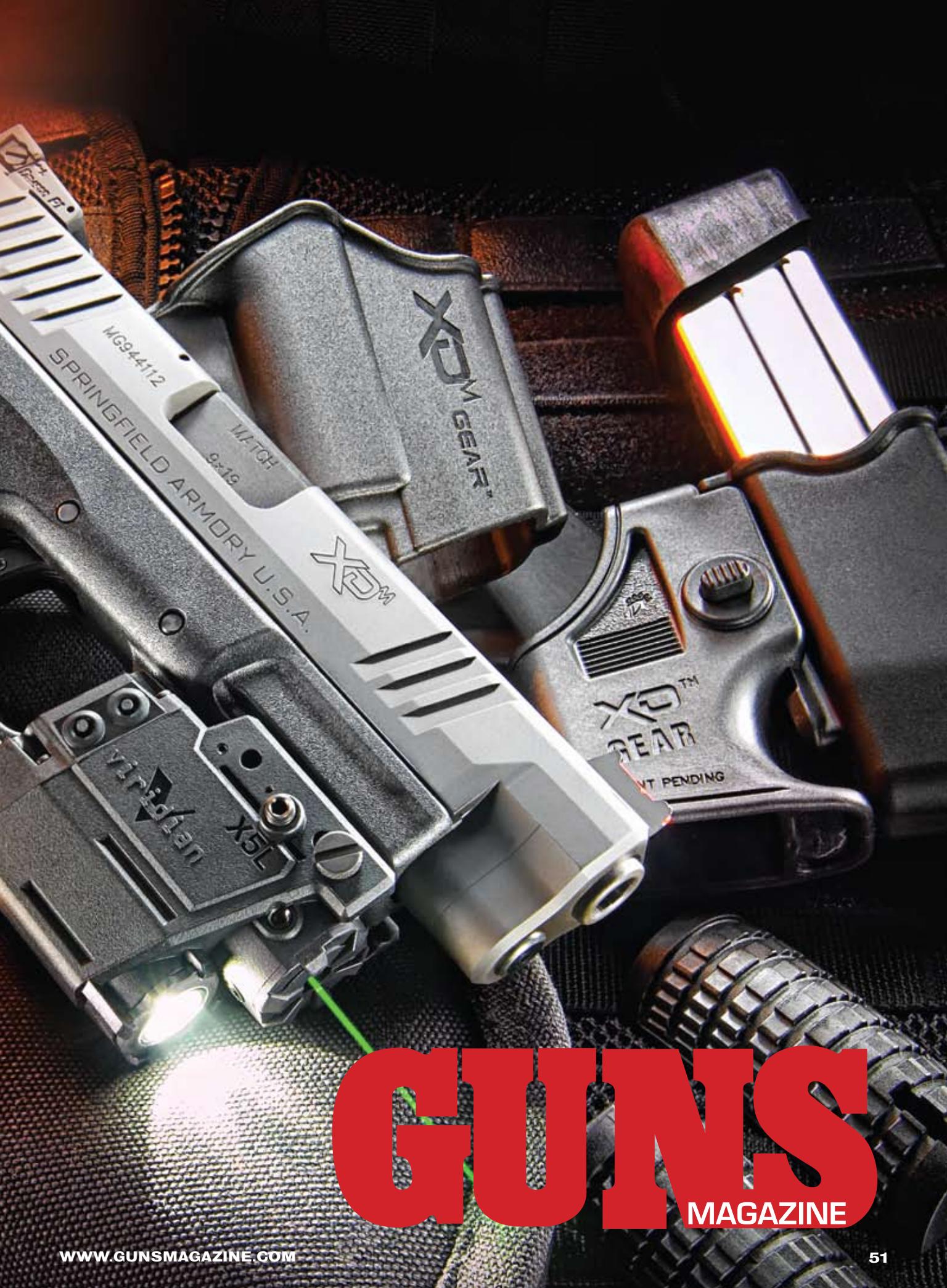
Testers were unanimous in liking the Dawson sights, which have earned their popularity in action shooting competition for good reason. Ours had a bright red fiber optic in the front we older shooters particularly appreciated. With older eyes, the lens grows stiff and takes longer to change focal planes. Even if we were looking at the targets, the glowing orb of the fiber optic settled on the aiming point like a red dot on an Aimpoint, allowing good hits quick without perfect focus on the front sight.

The magazine well attachment is from PistolGear, their humongous Unlimited model. As its name implies, it is designed for the more exotic, open class divisions of pistol competition. Nearly 2" wide, this massive funnel virtually allows the shooter to turn the pistol upside down and drop in a full magazine from above. I’m not sure what that’s good for, but it seems kinda cool. In prone shooting, as in open class shooting at 50 yards in PPC or at the 25- or 50-yard lines in an NRA Action Pistol match such as the Bianchi Cup, this wide-base butt can be set on the ground by the shooter and used as a “unipod.” Contrary to the old belief the butt on a solid surface will somehow cause mysterious vibrations



A TOUCH OF
THE MASTER
SPRINGFIELD ARMORY
CUSTOM SHOP XD(M) 9MM.





GUNS

MAGAZINE



Mas is pleased with these three targets from Stage 3 of the IDPA Classifier fired from 15 to 20 yards. He was down only seven points, at Master-class speed, thanks to the "shootability" of the Custom Shop XD(M) 9mm.



Note the best four out of five shots (above, left) with 124-grain Black Hills JHP at 25 yards, fired prone. This kind of grouping (above, right) wins practical shooting matches. At 25 yards prone, economy Rem-UMC 147-grain full metal jacket, and the Custom Shop XD(M) 9mm delivered respectable "budget-priced" accuracy. Note the "best three" cluster. Photos: Gail Pepin



IPSC/USPSA ace Bill Mayne (above) shoots the Custom Shop XD(M). Arrows show the ejected brass from an extremely fast double tap, yet the pistol is still on target. Firearms blogger and instructor Kathy Jackson (below) enjoyed shooting the Custom Shop XD(M), and did very well with it. Photos: Gail Pepin.



making bullets go awry, this extremely solid practical shooting position allows tack-driving accuracy at effective, practical speeds.

The flowerpot magazine well does indeed glide the magazines into the butt as slick as glass. However, because its skirts extend not only far beyond the sides of the grip-frame but well below the natural butt of the gun, you *need* the extended butt plates of the Arredondo-modified magazines to fully seat your reload. Using standard XD(M) magazines, the shooter's palm stopped on the bottom edge of the well before the magazine fully seated, requiring an additional push of the thumb to lock the magazine in place.

With the Unlimited version of the PistolGear mag well, the "IDPA box" into which a shooter's pistol must fit to be eligible for competition would not close on this gun, which allows 1-5/8" as the maximum width. A phone call to International Defensive Pistol Association headquarters in Berryville, Arkansas, confirmed this rule was still in force. I checked with Deb Else at the Springfield Armory Custom Shop, who confirmed the shop can install the Operator style of PistolGear magazine well at the customer's option. This one is narrower and, Deb believes, should prove compliant with IDPA rules. Since I shoot more IDPA than any other kind of pistol competition these days, that option would be my personal choice.

Custom In Action

Unable to shoot an IDPA match with this gun because of the oversize mag well, I ran the IDPA Classifier with it in the presence of an IDPA certified range officer, who put me through the course and kept score. This is a 90-shot course fired in three stages as far as 20 yards away. At 7 yards in Stage 1, I was averaging two seconds for "Mozambiques," sequences of drawing and shooting one target twice in the body and once in the head. The pistol's good pointing characteristics got me into the chest quick, and the eye-catching fiber optic Dawson front sight drew the aim naturally for the precise head shot at the end of each string. The "Mini-Prez" string of Stage 1 (draw, shoot each of three targets once in the body, reload from slide-lock, and do it again) went 5.56 seconds. The 30-round stage finished with a raw time of 21.57 seconds, with 7 points down for a finalized score of 25.07 seconds.

Stage 2 at 7 yards includes a full El Prez, executed as above but with a total of 12 shots on the three targets with a slide-lock reload in between, in 8.33 seconds. The 30 rounds there were done in 20.10 seconds, again with 7 points down for a total 23.60 seconds adjusted

score. Stage 3 found the 20-yard stages averaging a little under 15 seconds each, while the 15-yard stage (draw, kneel, shoot each of the three targets twice from around the side of low cover) was 3.89 seconds. For the third time, I was down 7 points (hmmm, three "lucky sevens" in a row) and the raw time of 33.72 seconds turned into a final Stage 3 tally of 37.22 once half a second was added for each point down from perfect.

Total score was 85.89, faster than average for me and faster than the 89 seconds and change required to make Master in the Enhanced Service Pistol (ESP) division of IDPA, which is where the 9mm XD is situated because it is mechanically a single action pistol. I was pleased with the results. The good grasp and easy trigger had minimized bad shot placement, and the reloads had been fumble free, while the superb sights had gotten my aging eyes on target faster and more surely than usual.

Another gun game for which the XD(M) is suitable is IPSC (International Practical Shooting Confederation) competition, administered in this country by USPSA, the United States Practical Shooting Association. IPSC is more "run and gun" than IDPA, and since this old geezer "guns" better than he "runs," I turned the pistol over to Bill Mayne while we were teaching together at Firearms Academy of Seattle. Bill is one of the top IPSC/USPSA competitors in the Pacific Northwest, and he gave me the following notes after wringing this pistol out on one of the FAS ranges:

"Excellent trigger," Bill wrote. "Soft feel to the break of the shot as

The oversize "flower pot" chute (which makes this gun illegal for IDPA) means use of Arredondo mag extensions are necessary. The extensions give you an extra 3 rounds for a total 22+1-round capacity.



ILLEGAL
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IDPA!

opposed to the classic description of a 'glass rod break.' Recoil tends to roll in the hand instead of straight back. Probably the weight is at the top with the slide being metal and the lower being polymer. The grip is compact in circumference providing confident control. The square tabs providing (grip) traction are adequate. Magazine spring tension is strong. Recommend a (magazine) loading device if shooting a lot for training or competition," Mayne concluded.

I shot a 7- to 25-yard informal PPC match on the forgiving BLEA (Basic Law Enforcement Academy) silhouette. Three of the 22 of us who shot it "cleaned" it with a 600 out of 600 score with the XD(M) Custom giving the tightest group for the tie-breaker win. Gail Pepin, petite Florida State and Florida/Georgia Regional Woman Champion in IDPA, shot this pistol in a double-speed qualification test, and scored an impressive 294 out of 300, with a 299 on a standard-speed run. Another straight-shooting gal with small hands, Kathy Jackson of the Cornered Cat Web site, shot the Custom XD(M) on the practice range and really liked it.

Clearly, this pistol won the affections of experienced pistol shooters. What about novices? I had it with me during one LFI-I class in New Hampshire that included a new shooter. Not yet comfortable with auto pistols, she had chosen a Smith & Wesson revolver, and was doing quite well with it until, in the last stage of her qualification shoot on the last day, it locked up on a high primer in one of the reloaded cartridges

she had been provided by a friend. It was her last six shots and she was out of speedloaders. I was near her behind the line and swapped her for the XD(M) test gun I was wearing on my hip, telling her quickly that the trigger pull would feel like her revolver when it was cocked. She squeezed off six rounds from the unfamiliar autoloader, and was surprised to find them all in the center 5-point zone of the IPSC target 15 yards distant. Before she left, she asked, "Where do I get a pistol like the one you handed me?"

That says it all. This is a very likable pistol. Personally, I'd order it with the smaller mag well added, or none at all, and with a somewhat heavier trigger pull, and standard mag release buttons. With the Springfield Armory Custom Shop, you can order these pistols exactly as you want them. Dave tells me delivery will run about 12 weeks.

GUNS

CUSTOM XD(M) 9MM
MAKER: HS PRODUKT D.O.O.
M. BOGOVICA 7, 47000
KARLOVAC, CROATIA
IMPORTER: SPRINGFIELD ARMORY
CUSTOM SHOP
420 WEST MAIN STREET
GENESEO, IL 61254
(309) 944-5631
WWW.SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM.

ACTION TYPE:	Locked breech, semiauto
CALIBER:	9mm (tested), .40 S&W
CAPACITY:	19+1
BARREL LENGTH:	4.5"
OVERALL LENGTH:	7.5"
WEIGHT:	32 ounces
FINISH:	Matte black
SIGHTS:	Dawson adjustable fiber optic sights
GRIPS:	Polymer frame
PRICE:	\$1,470 (as Customized)

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Trigger overtravel stop, Lightened trigger pull, Match-grade barrel, Extended mag release, Oversize mag well

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MOLTEN MYSTERIES

By Mike "Duke" Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

cast darn good bullets and I can prove it in competition. I ought to be able to after more than 40 years of enthusiastic experience. What is an onerous chore for many is quality time for me. My mind can be active while my hands are busy and the end result is a product from which I get much satisfaction. I refuse to have any distractions like television or telephones in my casting area and Yvonne knows she will get growled at if I'm disturbed while casting.

My first sentence begs a question. That is: how good are my "good bullets?" It's simple. They are as good as they need to be. That's not avoiding the question. It's true.

When I'm shooting at a metallic ram silhouette standing well over a quarter mile away during a Black Powder Cartridge Rifle (BPCR) Silhouette event I know with certainty my own home-cast projectile is more than good enough to stay on the small speck I'm seeing. A ram silhouette target measures 12" from belly line to backbone and they're placed at 500 meters (547 yards) yet

knocking down 10 in a row isn't a great feat—for me or many other experienced competitors. My .40 and .45 caliber match-grade cast bullets are that good.

On the other end I also shoot pistols and revolvers at steel plates measuring from 6" in diameter to 2' tall. They're placed from 10 to 30 yards and I'm usually shooting fast, swinging from dueling tree to torso size plate and back to falling disks. The quality of a cast bullet for such antics does not need be anywhere near what is needed for smacking down those rams at distance. With handguns I feel having enough

bullets is more important than having perfect ones.

Here's what I mean. A day's worth of silhouette shooting will eat up from 60 to 80 rounds. An afternoon's worth of handgun fun can empty out a few hundred rounds of pistol brass, and if I drag out one of my 9mm or .45 ACP submachine guns, then look out. There could be buckets of empty cases then.

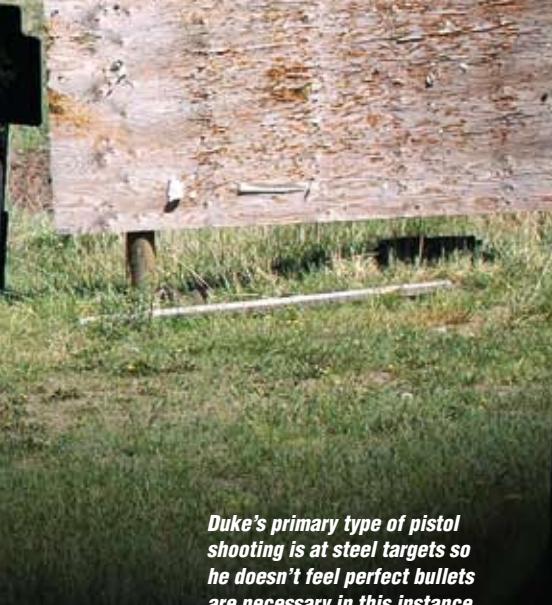
In between those two extremes are my military rifle collection in which I sometimes shoot cast bullets, too. They're seldom fired past 100 yards but with some of them my cast bullet loads will shoot groups just as small as that rifle will do with the finest jacketed bullets. My US Model 1903A3 .30-06s are prime examples. (And some of my military rifles won't shoot cast bullets well enough to hit a barn, for reasons undetermined as yet.)

Making good cast bullets is in the details. They must be of the proper alloy for the purpose. They need to fit the gun for which they are intended and they need to carry a lubricant suited for the propellant being fired. Also the bullet mould itself should be of a type also fitting the shooting purpose. And lastly the manner in which the alloy is put into the mould is an important consideration.

Ok, here goes. I would never try to cast BPCR Silhouette bullets in a multiple cavity mould. Mine are all one-holders. Some people do use multiple cavity moulds for such bullets and I can't say they're wrong when they sometimes outshoot me at events. But, I've tried double cavity moulds and just can't get the consistency from them that comes easily from a single cavity. What sort of consistency? I weigh each and every bullet fired in BPCR Silhouette, using only those within a plus or minus 3/10 of a grain variance (6/10 total variation). That's whether the bullets are 425-grain 40-caliber ones or huge 45-caliber 560

Duke has found cast bullets can shoot as accurately as jacketed bullets from his Springfield Model 1903A3 .30-06 military rifles. Duke finds it is best to use a hard alloy such as linotype with a gas check under the bullet as well.





Duke's primary type of pistol shooting is at steel targets so he doesn't feel perfect bullets are necessary in this instance.



When sizing bullets for most 9mm pistols, such as this 1938 vintage Luger, Duke uses a diameter of .357" for best results.

grainers.

To do that, I use only alloys of pure lead and pure tin blended in proportions of 20 to 1. Then when the lead furnace has that alloy melted to about 750 degrees it is dipped into the mould; holding the dipper to the mould's sprue plate for a few seconds and then breaking contact slowly. By removing the dipper slowly alloy flows on top of the mould leaving a big puddle. The puddle furnishes alloy for the cooling bullet to draw on as it hardens. A properly cast bullet's sprue puddle will have a small depression in it upon fully hardening. Also it should be mentioned that the mould is preheated from sitting on top of the lead furnace while the alloy is melting. Still, however,

15 bullets are cast rather fast and never even looked at before there are any "keepers." The mould then will be at proper temperature for perfect bullets.

After alloy is dipped into the mould, then it is set in front of a small, high-speed fan for a few seconds. You can actually see the sprue puddle change color when it solidifies. Then it is cut using a rubber hammer filled with lead shot, taking care to strike the sprue plate in the same plane in which it swings. That's so it doesn't get bent or warped from the blows. Then the bullets are dropped on a soft pad — a towel folded to many layers suffices there — taking care never to actually strike the bullet mould blocks if the bullet is recalcitrant

about leaving the cavity. Always tap the mould handle hinge instead.

And finally to get the consistency needed I never cast more than 115 match-grade bullets at a sitting. Why? Because then fatigue becomes a factor. Instead of going for quantity I take those 115 bullets to my electronic scale and weigh them. Very seldom do I end up with fewer than 100 that meet my weight criterion, and one time I actually had 111 of 115 inside those parameters.

Now what about handgun bullets? The details are just about opposite for them. Casting handgun bullets in a single cavity mould is an exercise in futility. I know! As a youth all I could afford in the beginning was a single cavity mould

Casting good bullets — and enough of them.



If you expect to hit those tiny specks out at 500 meters as do BPCR Silhouette competitors, then your cast bullets must be perfect.

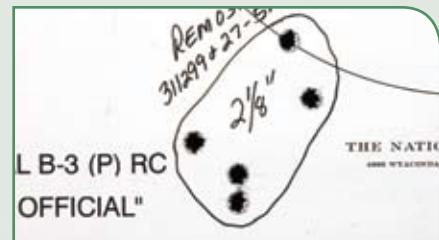
for my S&W K-38 revolver. It nearly worked me to death in order to shoot as much as I wanted to. With handgun moulds the more cavities the merrier. In days gone by there were "gang moulds" available with 8, 10, or even 12 cavities. They're pretty much a thing of the past. Available today are mostly 3- or 4-cavity moulds.

Dipping alloy for handgun bullets is also a waste of time. This is where the bottom pour lead furnace comes into its own. Hold that bullet mould under the spout and let gravity put the alloy in it. This is simple; watch the alloy go into a cavity and when it is full slide the mould to the next one and so forth until all have their fill. Again be generous with the sprue puddle. I start with the foremost cavity and work backwards but it can be done in reverse too. Bottom pour electric lead furnaces have an accessory called a mould guide to hold the heavy moulds under the spigot but I sometimes just set the bullet mould on top of an inverted ingot mould. It works as well. (A bottom pour lead pot can also be used for dipping bullets but with its narrow

opening at top it can be awkward. I keep both types of pots on hand.)

After filling multiple cavity moulds the process is the same as with match-grade bullets: fan to cool the sprue, cutting the sprue with the lead-filled rubber hammer, and tapping out the bullets being careful not to whack the mould blocks. But here's a big difference. The only inspection I give handgun bullets is to look at their bases when the sprue plate is opened. If the bullet base is fully filled out then it's a keeper. If it's rounded it goes back in the pot. At 10- to 30-yards range a handgun bullet can have all sorts of wrinkles and still shoot just as good as one appearing perfect.

Here are two more differences: Because of the vast assortment of handgun types, not one alloy suffices for all. When casting bullets for autoloaders I go hard, such as linotype hard. When casting low-speed revolver bullets, soft is better, as in the same 1-20 alloy used for BPCR Silhouette bullets. Autoloading pistols generally have shallow rifling and also the bullet must



Cast bullet groups can equal the groups fired with jacketed bullets. The alloy used is linotype and a gas check is applied as well.

travel from magazine up a feed ramp and into a chamber. Harder ones make that journey better.

The second difference is when casting handgun bullets I often use more than one mould. The first is filled and set in front of the fan while the second one is being filled. While it sets in front of the fan the first one is filled again. Alternating moulds like that can help produce a huge pile of bullets in short order. My favorite .44-40 bullet is RCBS 44-200FN and the unenlightened folks at RCBS can't seem to understand they also need to make some 3- and 4-cavity handgun moulds. They staunchly insist on only making 2-holers. So to compensate for their failing, I have two 44-200FN moulds and use the alternate mould casting method when I want to produce piles of them.

Am I forgetting bullets for the military rifle collection? Nope. They are made just the same as handgun bullets except with those rifle cartridges capable of higher velocities and higher pressures only linotype alloy is used. And on the end of those rifle bullets I always use gas checks, but seldom use them for any other cast bullets. They're not allowed



As the dipper is removed from the sprue plate hole (above, left) Duke allows a generous puddle of alloy to remain. When there is a depression in the middle of the sprue puddle it is likely that the bullets have filled out well. When casting bullets only the handles should be tapped with soft hammer or wood mallet (above, right) to get the bullets to drop from their cavities. Duke dips his bullets for BPCR Silhouette competition. Note he applies the alloy to the mould with it turned sideways. After Duke presses the ladle to the mould then both are rotated upright.



This is Duke's casting area. There is also a large exhaust fan above the lead pot pulling fumes out the window.



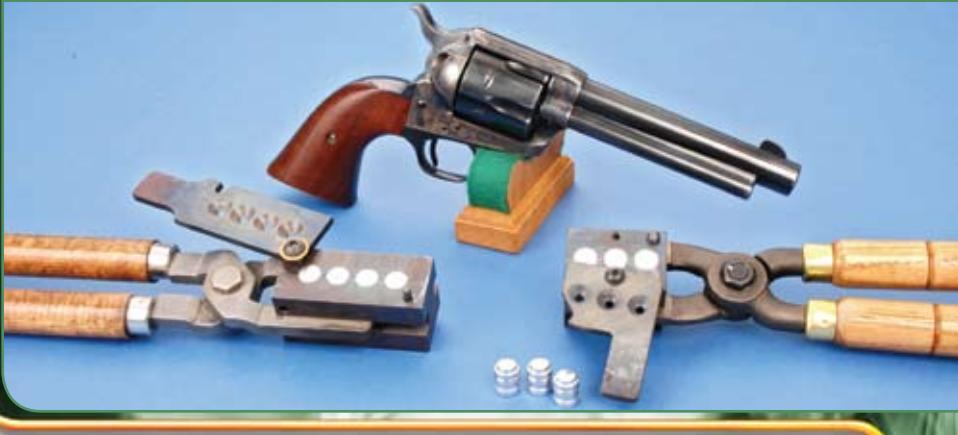
in BPCR Silhouette anyway and in my old age I prefer soft shooting handguns instead of magnums. Fast traveling handgun bullets usually do benefit from gas checks.

Now let's look at sizes — bullet sizes. I say, "Go big." That means I would rather have a bullet .003" over a firearm's barrel's groove diameter than even .0005" smaller. That said, for my BPCR Silhouette bullets I am happy with bullets .001" larger. That means if the barrel measures .408", a .409" bullet makes me happy and with .458" barrels then .459" bullets are fine. An old gunwriter myth goes, "The best sizing of cast rifle bullets is no sizing." I used to buy into that and ran my .409" .40 caliber slugs in a .410" die. It applied lube but didn't touch the bullets. Using that bullet sizing method in a Lone Star .40-65 rolling block I once won the Montana State BPCR Silhouette championship. Then I started sizing my bullets so they were perfectly round. With those sized .45 caliber bullets I won the 2008 Arizona Scoped State BPCR Silhouette championship. Go figure.

Revolvers can be a different story. There we also have the factor of cylinder chamber mouths along with barrel diameter. The Colt SAA in .45 caliber is a special offender in that its barrels are uniformly .451" and its cylinder chamber mouths since about 1956 have been .455" and sometimes bigger. There I compromise; sizing my rather soft 1-20 bullets to .454". Pistols for 9mm Parabellum can also present problems. Nominal bullet size for them is .355" yet I've never seen a 9mm shoot even the hardest cast bullets worth a hoot if they are sized .355". Many will do OK with .356" bullets. All my military 9mms (Browning Hi Power, Luger, P38) accept cartridges loaded with .357" cast bullets and shoot them as good as I can hold.



With revolvers there is an added factor to consider in sizing cast bullets. That is the size of the cylinder's chamber mouths (above, left). When casting handgun bullets Duke only checks their bases (above, right) for defects. Duke feels with handguns it's more important to have enough cast bullets than to have perfect ones so he uses multiple cavity moulds for handgun bullets.



Lead alloy bullets need lubrication. Otherwise they leave lead fouling in a firearm's barrel. There are dozens of blends on the market from soft ones meant for black powder shooting, wherein the lubricant also helps keep fouling soft, to hard ones requiring the lube/sizer machine have a heater to get them to flow. I keep three lube/sizing machines on a bench. One is always set up for .40 caliber rifle bullets, one is always set up for .45 caliber rifle bullets, and the third is changed around for all other bullet sizes I cast. All three of those Lyman lube/sizing machines are filled with SPG Lubricant; a soft type often considered "just" a black powder lubricant but which I have found works well for everything. Besides SPG stands

for Steven Paul Garbe, owner of the company, who has been a friend for over 25 years.

I just did an inventory, finding I currently cast bullets for 19 rifle cartridges and 19 handgun cartridges. Collectively those cast bullets go into more than 100 guns. For handgun sizes they range from .30 Mauser to .455 Webley and for rifle rounds they range from 6.5 Japanese to .50-70 Government. Some guns such as my BPCR Silhouette match rifles are never fired with anything but my own cast bullets and others such as my military rifles see them only occasionally. As long as I am a shooter and handloader I will remain a bullet caster — and a darn good one even if I say so myself.

THE NEW SR556

“AR” now stands for “A Ruger.”

Dave Douglas

It was a dark and stormy night — no really — it was a dark and stormy night. Ruger flew a group of writers to their New Hampshire facility in the middle of the worst ice storm in 20 years. The early December storm cut power to millions of homes and our hotel was dark as well.



The 16.12" barrel (above) is chrome lined and mounted with a flash suppressor. Note the 4-position gas regulator at the front of the handguard. The Troy Ind. BattleSight is adjustable for windage and is removable should optics be desired. To dismount the gas system, push the regulator cam pin from left to right until the detent stops any additional travel. Remove the regulator, regulator detent, and piston by rotating the regulator until the flat lines up with the hook on the gas block. Ruger recommends not trying to remove the gas block, which needs special tools.



After a night of indoor ice camping we were shuttled to the Ruger plant, dodging downed trees and power lines along the way and placed in the conference room to await the Ruger marketing team's arrival. We were told the non-disclosure forms we signed were active until the SHOT Show, only a month and a half away; then we could write about their new little revolver we were being introduced to, the LCR.

But interestingly, covering the conference room walls were all sorts of diagrams, mechanical drawings, project management workflow charts and parts photos of an AR — with the Ruger logo on it! Holy smoke, does this mean the company producing the Mini 14, the main, equal-in-caliber competitor to the AR system, was “going to the dark side?” Were they going to produce a black gun? Yes and yes.

“Oh and by the way, the non-disclosure forms you signed cover the depictions on the wall of our other project too,” we were told. Now a month and a half to keep the secret about the LCR was one thing — the time frame was short and somewhat manageable. But, we were told the AR project would be months away.

After much sniveling and gnashing of teeth we did get to fondle preproduction models of the new AR. But, I really think they were just teasing us — and derived a great deal of pleasure in doing so. With gun writers, it was like handing a lollipop to a 4-year old and telling

him he couldn't take the wrapper off — or eat it. Sadistic! Finally, four months later, the Ruger SR556 debuted at the NRA show in Phoenix, Arizona. We were all sent e-mails lifting the embargo and they even sent us one of the first production guns to evaluate.

Engineering

Early in the project, Brian Vuksanovich was asked if he wanted to participate. Being one of Ruger's chief engineers and an avid AR shooter he jumped at the chance. He told me, “What we wanted to do was make a more durable rifle, but we wanted everything to fit in the same envelope. I also wanted everything to work with all the older stuff. That's part of the reason we kept the lower receiver standard and Mil-Spec. We made significant changes to the upper. We took things that were wrong with the design and improved them and we kept things that worked well. One of our goals was to make the improvements without screwing up the things that were good in the original design.”

Brian is an avid reader of a number of Internet AR forums and commented on the amount of traffic carrying erroneous information. He said, “Some folks have been saying the receiver is cast and the barrel isn't up to Mil-Spec standards. They were guessing, but they guessed wrong. Everything on the gun is high quality. The receivers are forged aluminum and the heavy contour, chrome-lined barrel is cold hammer forged from Mil-Spec 41V45 Chrome-Moly-Vanadium steel. Also, we chambered the gun in 5.56 NATO, which, as you know, also fires .223 Remington ammunition.”

“When we introduced the gun at the NRA show in Phoenix, we put 20,000

rounds through it. No one cleaned the it and we used a bunch of different ammo, Hornady, Black Hills, Remington, Winchester USA and Federal. There were no malfunctions at all," Vuksanovich commented. Brian is pretty proud of the SR556 and rightfully so.

Quality Parts

The SR556 comes standard with a 1-piece, 10" Troy Industries Quad Rail Handguard providing ample room for mounting sights, optics and accessories. The handguard is made exclusively for Ruger and is pinned to the upper receiver giving the piston-driven transfer rod a rigid platform. It's so solid that after 100 rounds fired from a grenade launcher attached to the handguard rail there was no wear and the attachment was still as tight as when first attached.

Troy Industries folding BattleSights are also included. These are easily removed or replaced, rugged, high-quality sights allowing co-witnessing with Mil-Spec optics. They can be folded down with the push of a button, or quickly flipped to the up position. The rear sight is windage adjustable and includes short and long-range apertures. The front sight is elevation adjustable and protected by encompassing wings.

The list of included quality features for the Ruger SR-556 is a long one. It also comes with a 6-position telescoping M4-style buttstock housing a Mil-Spec buffer and spring. The pistol grip is a Hogue Monogrip and three Troy Industries rail covers are part of the package.

Also supplied are three, 30-round Magpul PMAGs. They feature a storage/dust cover, stainless steel springs and a self-lubricating, anti-tilt follower. These are true 30-round mags — not the load 28 and call it a 30 rounder type. They stand up to a lot of abuse and when dropped from the mag well during a rapid reload you won't need to worry about tweaking the mag lips — a major source of failure-to-feed malfunctions.

The rifle is shipped in a padded carrying case sporting the Ruger logo, hook-and-loop fasteners to hold the rifle in place and it includes internal magazine pockets.

The lower is a standard AR system receiver. Everything is Mil-Spec allowing you to accessorize as far as your wallet will take you. The upper receiver is where Ruger put their stamp on the design significantly improving function.

The patent-pending, 2-stage, piston driven, operating rod system delivers a smooth power stroke to the bolt carrier while venting combustion residue out the bottom of the gas block. The gun runs cooler, cleaner and is easier to maintain than gas-driven rifles. This

All the controls are in the same place as an AR's. Folding BattleSights are provided on the M1913 Picatinny rail. The Troy Ind. Quad Rail also comes with three rail covers should you decide not to mount a host of accessories.



Folding BattleSights allows for a variety of optics to be mounted and can be co-witnessed in some cases. Here, a Trijicon ACOG is mounted to the M1913 rail. A LaRue Tactical Forward Universal Grip is mounted to the forearm.

The SR556 comes with three Magpul 30-round magazines and is chambered for 5.56mm NATO. An EOTech Holosight and 3X magnifier is mounted to the rail.



significantly improves operability and most importantly, reliability. It has an adjustable 4-stage gas regulator allowing the shooter to select single shot with no ejection, a position for suppressor use, one for normal operation and finally one for difficult operating environments. The latter uses the widest gas vent and provides absolute reliability under heavy use or with difficult or heavily fouling ammunition.

Energy is transferred by the piston-driven, electroless nickel and Teflon infused coated transfer rod to a 1-piece bolt carrier with integral transfer key thus operating the bolt. This was where a great deal of work went into the SR556. One of the more significant problems encountered in the op-rod design is carrier flip. Vuksanovich and the design team put many hours into solving that issue — and did a pretty good job of it as far as I can see.

SR556

MAKER: STURM RUGER
200 RUGER ROAD
PRESCOTT, AZ 86301
WWW.RUGER.COM

ACTION: Gas operated,
semiauto

CALIBER: 5.56 NATO,
.223 Remington

CAPACITY: 30

BARREL LENGTH: 16.12"

OVERALL LENGTH: 32.75" to 36"
(Adjustable)

WEIGHT: 7.92 pounds

FINISH: Manganese Phosphate,
Hardcoat Anodized

STOCK: M4-style collapsible

PRICE: \$1,995

The real question about Ruger's new SR556 is: does it shoot and will it continue to shoot when you need it? The answers are yes and yes — and then some.

Out of the box accuracy was astounding. The 16.12", Chrome lined, 1:9 twist barrel provides more than adequate accuracy. I shot magazines loaded with random brands of ammunition. Federal's TRU 55-grain, Hornady TAP in 55-grain and 75-grain, ATK's XM193 and ICC's frangible. It fed every thing given to it with no malfunctions and yielded between MOA groups to 2.5" groups consistently. It seemed to really like the heavier bullet weights best.

One complaint I've heard about op-rod system guns is an increase in felt recoil and this one kicks like a .375 H&H — *not!* For crying out loud, it's a 5.56/.223. There is no recoil — and if anyone is bothered by this nebulous increase in the recoil of an op-rod system AR, they need to find something else to do — collecting butterflies comes to mind.

As of this writing, the gun has gobbled a mixture of ammunition amounting to over 2,000 rounds with absolutely no gun-induced malfunctions and only one cleaning. I did have one failure to feed issue using a metal magazine, but changing back to the Magpul P-Mags took care of that issue. An inspection of the metal magazine revealed bent feed lips — a common problem when the mag hits the ground while still containing ammo.

Disassembly

Please — it's an AR. It comes apart just like any other AR. I will not

embarrass you by going through the entire sequence of steps. The lawyers had Ruger do that in the User Manual. The only difference is the gas regulator system at the front of the upper receiver. The gas regulator, indent stop spring and push rod are easily disassembled for cleaning.

Ruger has long been known for building tank tough firearms that can take a beating and still perform at a level you need to protect your life or that of loved ones. The SR556 comes from the factory equipped with just about everything you'll need to accomplish that task.

Out of the box, the Ruger SR556 is ready to be put to work — whether that means shooting at the range for pleasure, sticking it behind the door to ward off zombies in the middle of the night or for a law enforcement officer to stick in the rack between the seats in his patrol car. This one is ready to go.

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PUBLICATIONS

BRING HOME THE BIG BIRDS

John Barsness

Rooster pheasants have the reputation of being the upland equivalent of Cape buffalo, not because they might stomp an unfortunate hunter into the fertile earth of a Kansas cornfield, but because they're tough to bring down. There's a certain amount of truth to this, but a large part of the "toughness" of both pheasants and buffalo is due to bad shooting and the wrong ammunition.

Pheasants are very long — but up to 2' of their length is tail. Many hunters shoot at the whole bird, putting the center of their shotgun's pattern too far back. Feathers fly — but so does the bird, often beyond the reach of even a good Labrador retriever.

Instead, concentrate on the "leading edge" of a rooster. This is the same suggestion every shotgunning instructor pounds into students, because the students will hit more clays if they focus sharply on the leading edge, instead of the entire target. The difference between the front and rear of a 4-1/4" clay pigeon obviously isn't nearly as much as between the beak and the tail-tip of a pheasant, but the principle is the same: When we concentrate on the front of a flying target, we're far less likely to shoot behind.

Pheasants get shot with the wrong ammunition because the average shotgunner is cheap. This first shows up before hunting season, when the hunter doesn't practice much

Pheasants are very long, but the tail isn't a vital area. Focus on the head when shooting.

The pheasant gun doesn't have to be a 12. Two of John's favorites are a 28-gauge Remington 870 (top) and a 16-gauge Winchester Model 12.

because ammunition and clay birds cost money. It kicks in again the day before the season — or maybe even the morning of opening day, because some pheasant states (such as South Dakota) don't allow hunting until midday. (The reason is supposedly to allow farmers to sleep in until a reasonable hour, rather than get rousted before dawn by aspiring hunters pounding on their doors.)

Our aspiring hunter has already filled up his gas tank, and may have driven a day or two and spent the night in a motel. He may have bought a steak dinner at a restaurant and, to make sure the steak rested easily on his stomach, poured a few quarts of some sort of liquid on top. His wallet is a little thin, so when he finds stacks of "SALE! SALE! SALE!" shotgun shells at Wally World, he buys a box.

Ol' Softie

He should have bought the SALE! ammunition earlier and shot it at clay birds, because it really doesn't matter much what kind of shot hits a clay. Cheap ammunition is normally loaded with softer shot, because softer shot is cheaper. This isn't an entirely bad thing. Softer shot will normally pattern a little wider from the over-choked barrel of the average pheasant shotgun, because some of the shot deforms during its trip down the barrel, and the deformed shot tends to veer away from the main pattern.

However, softer shot also doesn't penetrate all that well, because it flattens upon hitting the target. Yeah, your grandfather said if shot expands like a .30-30 bullet it kills better. That might be true on a small bird like a dove or quail, but not on a pheasant. Like a bullet blowing up on a Cape

PHEASANT



buffalo's shoulder, when soft shot hits rooster bone, it often stops right there.

A wise pheasant hunter might eat at McDonald's rather than the local steak house, using the extra cash to buy really good ammunition, preferably loaded with copper- or nickel-plated shot. The plating doesn't actually harden shot much, but few manufacturers apply it to cheap, soft shot. Harder shot will stay round when it hits a pheasant, and hence be far more likely to penetrate the chest cavity — one reason Fiocchi's Golden Pheasant shotshells, with nickel-plated shot, have been sought out by knowledgeable pheasant hunters for years.

With harder shot, smaller sizes can be used. Many pheasant hunters use No. 4 shot, especially after they've shot a few pheasants with cheap No. 6 shot and watched the pheasants fly away. Soft No. 4 shot will penetrate a pheasant, but even in a typical "magnum" load there simply aren't enough No. 4 shot to make sure enough pellets hit a pheasant in the right place.

A shotshell is the least efficient cartridge ever invented. At least 98 percent of the shot in a typical round won't even hit a flying pheasant. We do expect, however, more than one piece of shot to strike what we're shooting at — and when shooting a pheasant at least four pieces of shot work better than anything less. Four hits pretty much guarantees vital parts will be hit. Fewer strikes simply won't do the job consistently, no matter how big the pellets.

There are about 135 lead No. 4 shot in an ounce. Thus the typical 12-gauge shot charge of 1-1/4 ounces contains about 170 shot pellets. The patterning standard for full choke is at least 70 percent of a shotshell's pellets in a 30" circle at 40 yards — and 40 yards is a longish but still typical shot at wild pheasants. A little math shows a typical 1-1/4 ounce load of No. 4 shot will land about 120 pellets inside that 30" circle.

A 30" circle has an area of 707 square inches, so a typical full-choke pattern will average a hit about every six square inches. The body of a rooster pheasant covers about 15 square inches. Divide 15 by six and we find that a typical 1-1/4 ounce load of No. 4 shot will, on average, put 2.5 shot into a pheasant at 40 yards. Since shotshells don't contain any half-shot, this means a lot of the time only two pellets will strike the bird. This isn't enough to guarantee a vital hit.

Pheasants aren't covey birds, and even though several can get up (above), we usually shoot them one at a time. John's favorite all-around pheasant gun is a Merkel side-by-side (below) in 12 gauge, with two triggers and an improved-cylinder and a tight modified choke.



Plus, at ranges under 40 yards the average shotgunner also isn't good enough to center a close-range pheasant in a tight full-choke pattern. He's more likely to hit the bird with the pattern fringe, resulting in the same inadequate number of pellet strikes.

Of course, "magnum" loads will make a difference. Or will they? Let's up the load to 1-1/2 ounces of shot, containing about 200 No. 4 pellets. Our typical hunter is too cheap to buy this ammo, but hey, maybe his rich uncle sprang for a box. This raises the pattern density at 40 yards (again from a full choke) to one pellet every 5 square inches. Now we're up to three hits on a rooster at 40 yards, still not enough to anchor a bird every time.

Nope, the real solution is to use smaller, harder shot. To average four hits on a rooster, at least 190 shot have to land inside a 30" circle. With a full choke this means we need to

GUNS AND LOADS.

start with at least 270 shot in the shell. Not so coincidentally, a 1-1/4 ounce load of No. 6 lead shot contains about 280 pellets.

Even with a modified choke (60 percent at 40 yards) this means about 170 pellets will land inside the 30" circle. Up the load to 1-3/8 ounces (Fiocchi loads 12-gauge Golden Pheasants with this shot charge) and 187 shot should land inside the circle. This is close enough to our 190-pellet ideal — and in reality 40 yards is a long shot for most hunters. The wider spread of a modified pattern will also provide a little more leeway in pointing error. Combine a wider pattern with increased density and our average shooter will cleanly kill more pheasants than with the all-too-common full choke with No. 4 loads.

We can go a little lighter. Long experimentation with No. 7-1/2 shot proves it's too light for wild pheasants. However, the gap between No. 6 and No. 7-1/2 shot is the biggest in American shotshells, with No. 6 lead shot averaging 225 to the ounce and 7-1/2's 350. When it can be found, No. 7 shot plugs the gap, at around 300 shot per ounce. Not so coincidentally, No. 7 American shot is the same size as the British No. 6, the size they use to shoot driven pheasants, typically with a little more than 1 ounce of shot.

Going Small

A couple of years ago I decided to see what the 28-gauge would truly do on upland birds, both with factory loads and handloads. The agreement with myself was if the little gun started wounding, it would be put aside for more manly gauges. I ended up shooting the 28 the entire fall here in Montana, on upland birds from mourning doves to 5-pound sage grouse.

Many bigger birds were taken with Winchester's 1-ounce factory load featuring No. 6 shot, and even 3/4-ounce Premium load from Federal provided plenty of pattern density at 40 yards with a full choke. But I also worked up a 7/8-ounce load with high-antimony No. 7 shot, ordered from Ballistic Products Inc. These averaged around 265 pellets a shell, and from a modified choke killed wild roosters very well at ranges out to 40 yards.

Please note the emphasis is on wild roosters. Pen-raised birds aren't the same thing. Though the majority of wild roosters are

birds of the year, most are hatched in May and by November are six months old — and the rest of the birds are at least 1-1/2 years old. Pen-raised birds are all young birds, and by definition are raised in pens, where they don't develop the same muscles, so aren't nearly as tough to bring down as wild birds. They also hold much tighter, instead of running, so shots are typically short. In the hands of a good wingshot, a .410 with No. 7-1/2 shot will cleanly kill most pen-raised birds, but simply isn't enough for wild birds, especially toward the end of the season.

I've hunted wild pheasants with every gauge from 28 up to 12, and every type of shotgun from single-shots to drillings. I like pumps a lot, but to my mind, wild pheasants are the perfect match for a double-barreled shotgun with two triggers and two different chokes. Pheasants aren't covey birds, so we usually shoot them one at a time. A wild rooster may get up anywhere from a few feet to 30+ yards away, so it's very handy to have both an open-choked barrel for short shots, and a modified or full barrel for longer shots.

Like most firearms enthusiasts I have more shotguns than can be used at any one time, but if forced to pick one pheasant gun it would be my Merkel 47E side-by-side with two triggers. This weighs a trifle over 6-1/2 pounds and has .008" of choke in the right barrel, .018" in the left. In more common terms this means improved-cylinder and a "tight" modified. It's a 12-gauge, though could just as easily be a 20 or 16. (When hunting with a single-barrel shotgun, I prefer a looser modified choke, like the .010" constriction in my 16-gauge Model 12 Winchester.)

Aside from the right gun, a pheasant hunter needs a good vest, boots and dog. In recent years I've been wearing Filson's Tin Cloth Game Bag, one of the strap types. The waxed canvas has held up very well against all sorts of harsh vegetation. The skeleton design allows the bag to be worn over any sort of clothing from light shirts in mid-October to 3-layered combinations of miracle fibers in January. It has two big snap-top pockets for shells and other stuff, and the rear bag is more than large enough for a typical 3-rooster limit. The early-season boots are Red Wing Model 2233 work boots, single-layered leather to provide some breathability (try to find light



This bunch hunted in South Dakota while filming a Benelli On Assignment TV show. The shotguns ranged from a Stoeger 28-gauge side-by-side to a 20-gauge Franchi over-under and a 12-gauge Benelli pump. All worked great with the right loads.

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Eileen Clarke took this wild Montana rooster with a 28-gauge side-by-side and Winchester's 1-ounce load with copper-plated No. 6 shot.

hunting boots that don't include at least one layer of hot miracle fiber anymore), and the late-season boots Schnee's packs with liners, keeping my feet warm and dry in snow.

My present dog is a half-breed Labrador/English setter, but I've hunted with a bunch of pheasant dogs, including Boykin and springer spaniels, Labrador and Golden retrievers, German shorthairs and English pointers, and even one basset hound. The thing all the good dogs had in common was an ability to pin or flush roosters within range of a load of No. 6 shot — and then retrieve felled birds, even those not hit so well. This sometimes happens, because even a perfect Merkel is operated by a fallible human.

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VIEWS NEWS AND REVIEWS

RIGHTS WATCH

• DAVID CODREA •

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE POND IN SARAH BRADY PARADISE ...

That's the recurring headline I use over at my blog, *The War on Guns*, to illustrate absurdities and outrages arising from the UK's anti-defense laws — the very kind the Brady Campaign et al would like to impose in the US. With guns for self-defense banned, and with even acts of self-defense punished, those inclined to violence have found their biggest enabler is a government that guarantees them a disarmed victim pool.

Here are a few examples from my "Sarah Brady Paradise" files.

The London Times reports:

"The first 'anti-stab' knife is to go on sale in Britain, designed to work as normal in the kitchen but to be ineffective as a weapon."

From *The Daily Telegraph*:

"A group of golfers have been arrested on assault charges after allegedly fighting off a gang who attempted to steal their clubs."

Again from *The Daily Telegraph*:

"Three in four criminals found with a gun escape prison even though the number caught has almost doubled in four years..."

The Daily Mail tells us:

"Mother told police she feared stalker would kill her. They didn't come. That night she was murdered..."

And when the police do show up? From *The Guardian*:

"The public are fast losing patience with thuggish policing... This aggression is no doubt linked to the government's nasty habit of writing laws that prefer the convenience of security forces to the rights of free citizens."

Meanwhile, as the public is being brutalized by aggressors in and out of uniform, as criminals, but not defenders go unpunished, and as pleading mothers are butchered with — would you call them "pro-stab knives"? — what kind of laws are being written to promote the welfare of "this blessed plot, this earth,

this realm, this England"?

From *The Australian*:

"The Government is pushing ahead with legislation that will criminalise politically incorrect jokes, with a maximum punishment of up to seven years' prison."

The absurdities keep mounting. You could not make this stuff up. From *The London Evening Standard*:

"Men shot dead at anti-gun event..."

And again from *The Daily Mail*:

"Family of father stabbed to death by three thugs is denied compensation ... because he tried to fight back..."

It is no wonder that the latest *Mail* headline tells us:

"Britain's violent crime record is worse than any other country in the European union, it has been revealed."

"Official crime figures show the UK also has a worse rate for all types of violence than the US and even South Africa — widely considered one of the world's most dangerous countries..."

"In the UK, there are 2,034 offences per 100,000 people ... The US has a violence rate of 466 crimes per 100,000 residents..."

This is what the gun haters would reduce us to. And our domestic handgun-free Sarah Brady Paradise bears this out. As I write this column, here's the latest headline from the *Chicago Tribune*:

"The holiday weekend turned violent in Chicago, where police reported 10 people killed and at least 30 wounded on the city's streets."

Check out David Codrea's National Gun Rights Examiner column at www.examiner.com/gunrights.

GUNS

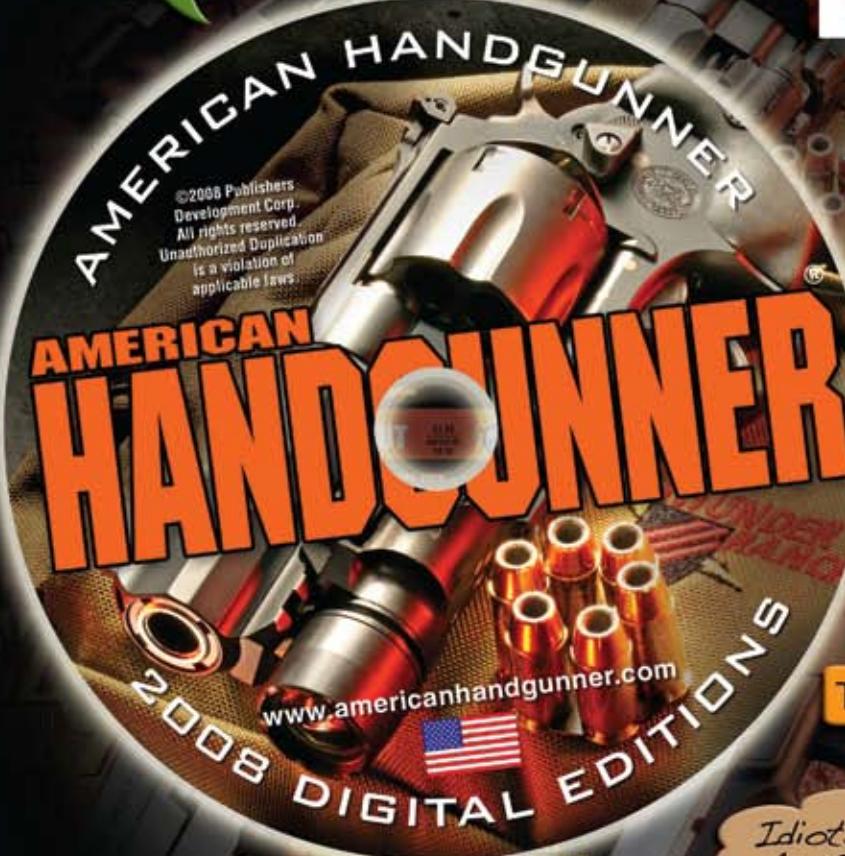
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SILVER SCREEN LEGEND XII A TRIBUTE TO WILD BILL ELLIOTT AS RED RYDER

Legendary Comic Book Cowboy Red Ryder was a fictional American hero to millions of boys and girls for almost three decades. He was created by noted cowboy artist Fred Harman and his marketing partner, Stephen Slesinger, first appearing in print in November 1938, eventually appearing in more than 750 newspapers and in 10 languages.

Red Ryder went to Hollywood, first appearing in 1940. Of the four actors who played Red Ryder, Wild Bill Elliott is perhaps the best known and undoubtedly the favorite Ryder of most fans. His trademark reverse-draw fully-carved double gun rig and matched pair of 2-toned Colt Single Action .45 revolvers, along with his quiet statement "I'm a peaceable man" (just before his right fist came up to pound the bad guy) were part of what made these B Westerns so great!

The Happy Trails Children's Foundation honors Wild Bill Elliott as Red Ryder this year with Silver Screen Legend XII, the 12th year the foundation, through the generosity of Colt's Mfg Co. of Hartford, Conn., has used very special guns and holsters to raise money for abused children.

New this year is a gorgeous pair of one-of-a-kind Damascus steel spurs in the Wild Bill Elliott style. The spurs were made and donated by acclaimed knife and spur maker Charles Sauer, and engraved by Master Engraver Norvell C. Foster. Jim Lockwood of Legends in Leather crafted the hand-carved double holster rig in the reverse draw style of Wild Bill Elliott along with the matching spur straps. Silversmith Michael Ekstrom produced the sterling silver conchas and buckle sets. The engraving on the pistols, and the special custom tuning of the guns were provided by Conrad Anderson, Rocktree Ranch. The exceptional carved stag grips were hand crafted by Bob Leskovec, Precision Pro Grips. Master woodcarver Ben Hansen, Beauty from Scratch, handcrafted the unique presentation case and Ron Love made and donated the prop cartridges. All of these wonderful people and companies are enduring examples of the very special American spirit known as "the cowboy way."

As a result of our association with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, and the positive and wholesome family values they represented, the Happy

Trails Children's Foundation is the only known children's charity in the country today actively supporting shooting sports, Second Amendment Rights and responsible gun ownership, and is in turn supported by generous contributions from shooters, collectors, organized shooting sports and the firearms industry! We are proud of this unique partnership!

Buy your tickets for this beautiful and unique museum-quality 1-of-a-kind cowboy collectible. Tickets are \$10 each or 11 tickets for \$100. The drawing will be held December 19, 2009 in Apple Valley, California. *You do not need to be present to win!* The winner will be notified by phone.

The total proceeds of this drawing benefit the Happy Trails Children's Foundation For Abused Children, a charitable non-profit organization under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All donations are fully tax deductible. To buy tickets, contact the Happy Trails Children's Foundation, Silver Screen Legend XII, 10755 Apple Valley Road, Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 240-3330, www.happytrails.org.

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The Silver Screen Legend XII for the Happy Trails Children's Foundation is a finely made copy of the gun used by Wild Bill Elliott as Red Ryder. The gun was donated by Colt, the carved rig by Jim Lockwood, conchas and buckles by Conrad Anderson, engraving by Norvel C. Foster, spurs by Charles Sauer, grips by Bob Leskovec, case by Ben Hansen and dummy cartridges by Ron Love. The entire rig is to be raffled off at \$10 per ticket in December 2009.



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MIDWEST 3-GUN CHAMPS

The 4th Annual Midwest 3-Gun Championships, held last June in Fayette, Missouri, offered shooters many interesting challenges and a lot of valuable prizes.

"The event just keeps growing," said Ken Flood, match director and national sales manager for FNH USA. "We had a full roster with some of the finest shooters in the country and a couple of new surprises. We had many who had never shot a 3-Gun before, and I believe we made some converts to the sport," he added.

First place winners in each division, include:

Tactical Optics: Daniel Horner
Tactical Iron: Robby Johnson

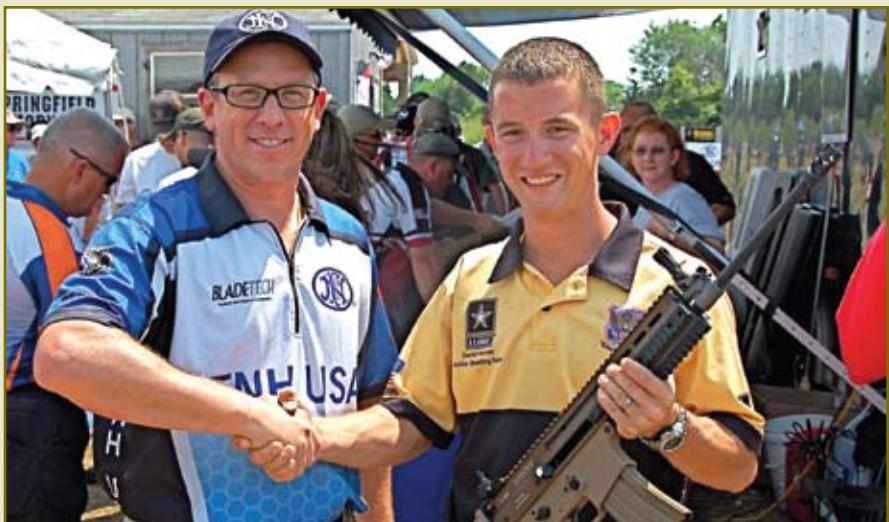
Tactical Optics, Heavy: Tate Moots

Heavy Metal: Michael Fordyce
Open: Don Bednorz

Stage 5: Daniel Horner

In both the Tactical Optics, Heavy and Tactical Optics Division, the winners shot the FN SLP shotgun, recently named Shotgun of the Year by NRA Publications.

Winning the FNH USA stage — where shooters used the FNP-45, the



Daniel Horner, winner of the Tactical Optics Division of the 4th Annual Midwest 3-Gun Championships was presented with an FN SCAR rifle by FN-USA's Ken Pfau, VP of sales for law enforcement and commercial sales.

FN SLP, and the FN SCAR 16S — was Daniel Horner and he won a SCAR 16S for his 1st place performance at this stage. Second and 3rd place went to Mike Ostrander and Jim Dunham, who won an FNP-45 and FN SLP, respectively.

A SCAR 16S was raffled off at the Championships and raised \$4,900 for the Wounded Warrior Project. The lucky — and very excited — winner was Mike

Hughes, a range officer. "This was a successful fund raiser by any standards, said Flood. "We were very happy to send that check to Wounded Warrior."

FNH USA is the sales and marketing arm of FN Herstal, S.A., Belgium. Contact FNH USA, P.O. Box 697, McLean, VA, 22101, www.fnhusa.com. — Courtesy DAG Tactical Communications

GUNS

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Bolt Action Military Rifles of the World

THE FULL-COLOR GUIDE TO
ALL YOUR FAVORITE
VINTAGE AND SURPLUS RIFLES

MUST HAVE BOOK FOR COLLECTORS

Perfection is an illusionary quality we always search for and seldom find. When you apply this to a hobby, it is doubly difficult to achieve considering the fact we tend to place our greatest expectations on anything a part of our leisure time away from our respective jobs.

Now apply this concept to a written work combining both amazing presentation with fantastic photography and you quickly realize the shortcomings of so many past efforts in the same arena. Not so with this truly beautiful book by Stuart C. Mowbray and Joe Puleo geared entirely towards collectors and firearms historians. I can't say enough about this wonderful book! I received my copy as a birthday gift from my oldest daughter Lauren. (They really know how to push Dad's

buttons!)

Bolt Action Military Rifles of the World is a remarkable work that is, if I may be so bold as to use an old cliché, "written by collectors, for collectors!" The photography is simply magnificent and focuses on the detail so often lacking from other works of its type and scope. Each rifle covered is shown in detail with the focus on markings and details frequently separating a common \$100 milsurp rifle from a \$1,000 collectible.

The work is organized by country and model with each rifles specifications, description and identifying marks and model distinctions. Most amazing of all, 2,431 color studio photographs grace the pages of this remarkable book! With future editions sure to follow, this is a "don't miss" for any firearms enthusiast! Contact Mowbray Publishing, 54 East School Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895, (800) 999-4697, www.manatarmsbooks.com.

— John Sheehan

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NCO AWARDED SILVER STAR

Rows of Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, stood at attention as the US Army recognized Staff Sgt. Conrad Begaye for bravery under fire in Afghanistan.

During a ceremony last June 30 at Caserma Ederle's Hoekstra Field, Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III, commander of US Army Africa, fastened the Silver Star to Begaye's uniform — recognition for his leadership and valor during an enemy ambush Nov. 9, 2007, in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

"There are people who have passed on that deserve this," Begaye said. "There were five men who died. I'll accept and wear it in honor of them, not for my actions, but for theirs."

Begaye said he would have preferred a simple handshake or a pat on the back. After all, infantrymen don't fight for medals, they fight for each other. That's why Begaye felt grateful to have Soldiers from his unit, Chosen Company, behind him on the parade field during the ceremony.

"What happened there is something I think about every day, it's not easy to forget about," Begaye said, recalling



Staff Sgt. Conrad Begaye stands before rows of fellow Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, during a ceremony last June 30, 2009. Begaye was awarded the Silver Star for his valorous actions during an enemy ambush Nov. 9, 2007, in the Nuristan Province of Afghanistan.

Photo: Capt. Joseph Sanfilippo, 2nd Bat, 503rd Inf Reg

events of that day.

Begaye's unit had just met with local Afghan leaders. They were hiking eastward along a small path on rugged terrain when his squad, his platoon's headquarters sections and a squad of

Afghan National Army Soldiers, began taking fire from enemy positions above.

Pinned down at first, Begaye was struck in the arm while returning fire and directing his men. Begaye bound over a cliff, calling to his troops to follow him

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down the rocky slope to find cover.

He kept his composure against overwhelming odds, directing and encouraging his fellow Soldiers under heavy fire. One paratrooper had been shot in both legs and was still taking fire.

Begaye called out to him to play dead, knowing the enemy would shift their fire away if they thought the Soldier was killed — quick thinking that likely helped save that Soldier's life.

Ignoring his own injuries, Begaye

moved a wounded Soldier to a nearby cave to protect him from enemy fire. Using a radio, he called his higher headquarters and directed mortar fire onto enemy positions — essentially ending the battle. Then he motivated a Soldier to organize a defensive perimeter of Afghan Soldiers to prevent their unit from being harassed or overrun.

Twenty-one months later, with his comrades standing quietly on the parade ground behind him, Begaye listened as Garrett spoke.

"Today, we honor a noncommissioned officer whose bold actions turned the tide of battle and saved the day ... whose courage under fire and fierce loyalty to his men still astounds us all," Garrett said.

"Outnumbered, wounded, and initially pinned down in the kill zone of an enemy ambush — he didn't hesitate to leap forward, literally, and take charge of the fight."

Begaye, a Navajo from Black Canyon City, Ariz., enlisted in the infantry 10 years ago. An airborne ranger, Begaye arrived in Vicenza in 2003. He deployed for year-long tours with Chosen Company to Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2005. In 2007, he deployed to Afghanistan's Nuristan Province with Chosen. — Capt. Joseph Sanfilippo, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment

GUNS



Having just fastened a Silver Star on the uniform of Staff Sgt. Conrad Begaye (right) from 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III, commander of US Army Africa, shakes Begaye's hand during a ceremony witnessed by his comrades. Capt. Joseph Sanfilippo, 2nd Bat, 503rd Inf Reg.

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COLT RECALLS PISTOLS

Colt's Manufacturing Company is recalling certain Colt model pistols. The models are Colt 1911 WWI Replica, 1918 WWI Replica, Combat Elite, New Agent, and Defender models, including the TALO Night Defender, sold since March 2007. Colt has determined the Slide Lock Safety and/or the Recoil Spring Guide Pad in these models were not manufactured to Colt specifications and must be replaced.

The Safety and/or Guide Pad in these models were recently found to be of improper hardness. As a result, the Safety may prematurely wear or be prone to break, especially if the pistol is dropped, and might not prevent an accidental firing. The Guide Pad might crack and possibly prevent the pistol from firing.

According to Joyce Rubino, Colt Vice President for Operations, "Although there have been no reports of personal injuries or property damage, safety is our number one concern. Therefore we are requesting that the affected pistols not be loaded or used until the part or parts have been replaced." She said, "We have promised to promptly retrofit these pistols to minimize customer inconvenience."

The range of serial numbers of these models covered by the recall is as follows:

Model	Serial Number Range	Safety Guide Pad
1911 WWI Replica	(O1911)	
4597WMK to 5414WMK X		
1918 WWI Replica	(O1918)	
1001WWI to 3431WWI X		
Combat Elite	(O8011XSE)	
CG10000E to CG11293E X		
New Agent	(O7810D) GT01001 to GT04505 X X	
Defender	(O7000D) DR33036 to DR35948 X	
TALO Night Defender	(O7000NDF) NDF0001 to NDF0400 X	

Colt has offered to replace the affected parts at no cost to its customers. Instructions for obtaining the recall service or replacement parts are posted on Colt's Web site at www.coltsmfg.com and can also be obtained by e-mailing Colt at Recall@colt.com, or by calling Monday-Friday, 8:30AM-12:00PM; 1PM-5PM EST, (800) 962-COLT (2658), and pressing Option "2."

GLOCK'S SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH

Handgun manufacturer Glock Inc. announced a 71 percent increase in pistol sales compared with last year's record first-quarter sales. The company also said its rate of new pistol orders continues to increase at a record pace as it moves into the second quarter. —Courtesy NSSF

SOLDIER RESCUES DROWNING GIRL



Pfc. Richard Bigouette rescued a 9-year-old child from the sea at Haeundae Beach in Busan, Korea, last June 13. Photo: Ken Hall, USAG Humphreys Public Affairs

A 2nd Infantry Division Soldier gave the gift of life to a 9-year-old Korean girl when he saved her from drowning at Haeundae Beach in Busan, Korea, last June 13.

Pfc. Richard Bigouette of Bravo Company, 602nd Aviation Support Battalion, was swimming a little way from shore with Pfc. Joshua Davis, also of Bravo 602nd ASB. Suddenly, Bigouette heard frantic screams from people on the beach pointing to a place beyond the waves, more than 50 yards out into the water.

A little girl was struggling for her life as she tried to remain above the water. Another girl, standing waist-deep in the choppy water between the waves, was crying for help.

"The waves were swelling up and she was caught between them in deep water," Bigouette said. Bigouette swam quickly to the girl, wrapped his arm around her shoulder and swam back through the waves toward the shore where Davis stood

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by to help bring her ashore.

Several people entered the water to help Bigouette bring the girl to shore. She was carried to medical personnel who revived her and saved her life.

Maj. David W. Price, 8th US Army Battle Command and Knowledge Management Officer, was vacationing on Haeundae Beach that day and witnessed the entire sequence of events.

"Out of nowhere, an American Soldier rushed to the water and began swimming toward the distressed individual," said Price. "It made me feel so proud that this Soldier would make the sacrifice to save a complete stranger. I felt the need to do the right thing and track down his chain of command and recommend he be recognized for his heroic action." — *Cpl. Kim Kuan-min, 8th United States Army Public Affairs, and Ken Hall, USAG Humphreys Public Affairs*

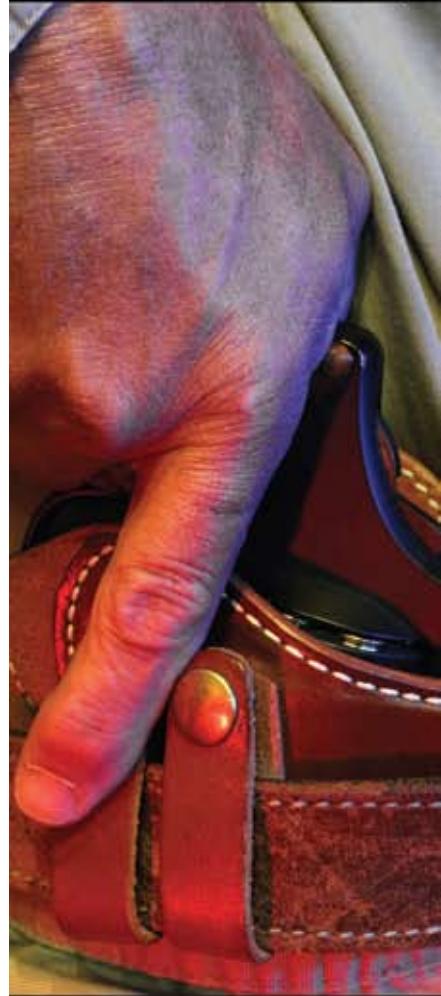
33 STATES FILE SUPREME COURT BRIEF

Two-thirds of the nation's attorneys general have filed an amicus brief asking the US Supreme Court to grant certiorari in the case of NRA vs. Chicago and hold that the Second Amendment applies to state and local governments through the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The 33 attorneys general, along with California's attorney general in a separate filing, concurred that the Second Amendment protects a fundamental individual right to keep and bear arms in the home for self-defense, disagreeing with the decision recently issued by a 3-judge panel of the US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. —Courtesy NSSF

PETA TRIES FAMILIES AFIELD BLOCK

As the long fight over the passage of the Families Afield apprentice hunter bill in Wisconsin is now in the governor's hands, PETA continues its attempt to block the legislation, the US Sportsmen's Alliance reports. The Wisconsin sportsman community is eagerly awaiting the signature of Gov. Jim Doyle on the recently passed legislation

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expanding hunting opportunities in the state. — Courtesy NSSF

JUMP IN PERMIT REQUESTS

Montana officials say requests for concealed weapons permits are much higher than usual this year, the Associated Press reports. According to statistics from the Justice Department, the state has issued more concealed-weapon permits in the first six months of 2009 than it issued during all of 2008. — Courtesy NSSF

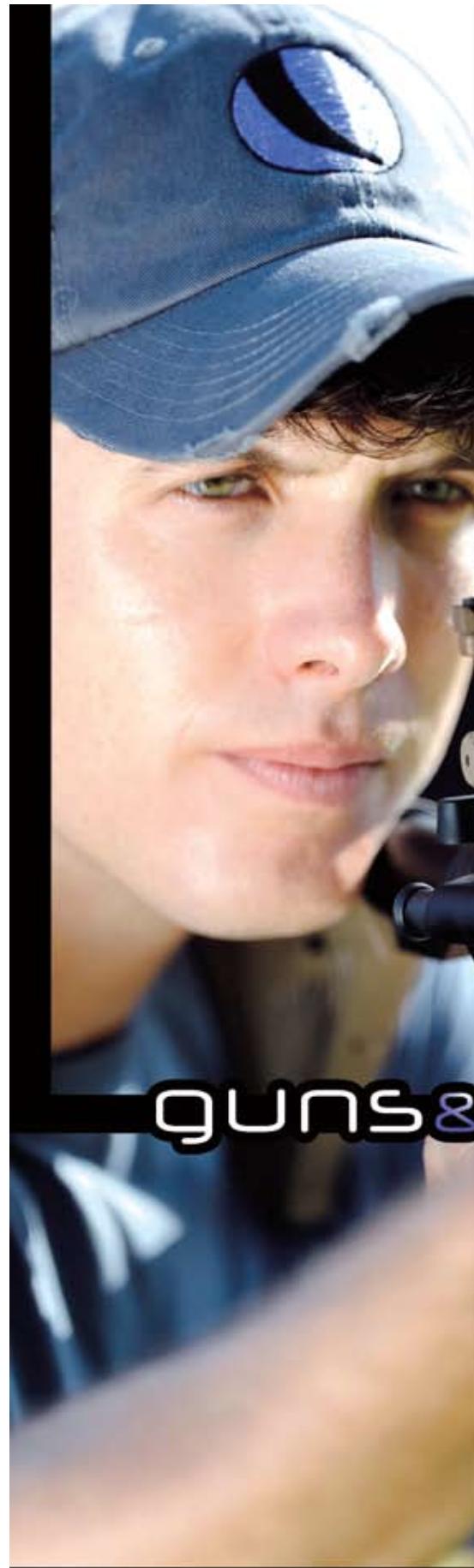
ARMY TRAINS WITH NEW HOWITZER



Spc. Scott O. Cornell, a gunner with the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, rotates the wheel on the M777 Howitzer to prepare it for fire at the Grafenwoehr Training Area on July 24, 2009. The unit was the first unit in Europe to test fire the M777, which will replace M198 howitzer. Photo: Staff Sgt. Fredrick P. Varney, 133rd Mobile PAD

Improvements in technology and weaponry are dire necessities in modern warfare. They achieve success on the battlefield and enable Soldiers to complete successful missions in support of the ongoing Global War on Terrorism.

Last July 24, Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment FIRES Squadron became the first unit in Europe to fire the Army's new M777 Howitzers at the Joint Multinational Training Command's Grafenwoehr, Germany, Training Area.



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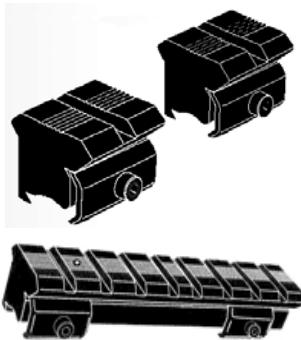
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Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment (above) fires the M777 Howitzer during a training exercise at the Grafenwoehr Training Area on July 24, 2009. The unit is the first artillery unit in Europe to conduct live-fire exercises with the new weapons system. Photo: Staff Sgt. Fredrick P. Varney, 133rd Mobile PAD. Konar Province (below), Afghanistan — Soldiers with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 321st Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 18th Fires Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C., fire 155mm rounds using an M777 Howitzer weapons system, last July 6, on Forward Operating Base Bostick, Afghanistan. The Soldiers were registering targets so they will have a more accurate and faster response time when providing fire support. Photo: Spc. Evan D. Marcy, 55th Signal Company



The M777 Howitzer replaces the M198 Howitzer as the premiere weapons system in Field Artillery. It is lighter, more accurate and requires fewer crewmembers.

"The lightweight M777 Howitzer will increase the capabilities of our artillery batteries because it is more versatile and can be transported to any location much faster than its predecessor the M198 Howitzer," Sgt. 1st Class Steven Jarvis said. "The M198 only has three points of contact to the ground and weighs 16,000 pounds, while the M777 maintains five points of contact for better stability, and weighs only 10,000 pounds."

"Stability increases the weapon's accuracy, which will increase our

success in Iraq and Afghanistan," added Jarvis.

The Soldiers of the unit will continue to train with the new M777 Howitzer. The Joint Multinational Training Command plays an integral role in helping the 2SCR train, while continuing to help the Army modernize by facilitating the testing of new equipment and weaponry in Europe.

"This training area is the only area in Europe units can do live-fire missions with large weapons, which prepares us for contingency operations downrange," Jarvis said. — Staff Sgt. Fredrick P. Varney, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Kentucky Army National Guard

SCTP NATIONALS DRAW 1,500

The Scholastic Clay Target Program's (SCTP) 2009 National Championships was held over 4 days last July in Sparta, Ill. About 1,500 young shooters from around the country competed at the event. This was the first year the competition was held independently of the Grand American.

The event featured team competitions in trap, skeet and sporting clays. Developed by NSSF, SCTP is managed nationally by the Scholastic Shooting

Sports Foundation (SSSF) with major funding from NSSF. Scores for this year's nationals are posted online at sssfonline.org. — Courtesy NSSF

GOVERNORS SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS

The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation recently announced the formation of a bi-partisan caucus of governors that will work to protect the interest of America's hunters and anglers, and advance sound wildlife

management policy. Guided by a bi-partisan leadership team of governors and staffed through the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus will complement and enhance both the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses. Gov. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Gov. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) have been selected as the inaugural co-chairmen. Gov. Haley Barbour (R-Miss.) and Gov. Dave Freudenthal (D-Wyo.) will serve as the inaugural vice-chairmen. Sixteen governors from across the country have joined the caucus as inaugural members. — Courtesy NSSF

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ICC JOT AMMUNITION

Clint Smith

In 2004 I moved my business from Texas to Oregon and when doing so started using green lead-free frangible ammunition on the ranges. I could be immature here and discuss all the childish whining done by people many of whom never, nor were ever going to be clients. The hue and cry was of how could we "cave into the government" blah, blah. You get the point.

Moving on past that, the last five years have produced lots of changes about the concerns — righteous or not — of the effects of ammunition and more importantly the willingness of the firearms industry to look and in many cases move in the direction of creating frangible lead-free, non-toxic or "green ammunition" so to speak.

In the forefront of this movement from the beginning are the ammunition people from Reynoldsville, Penn., better known as International Cartridge Corporation. ICC has been a staunch supporter of the frangible and lead free concept and their high quality products reflect that concern and interest. I have used their frangible ammunition in both rifle and pistol for five years with excellent results. Always raising the bar, the ICC folks have just introduced a new line of ammunition under the name of Green Elite JOT or "Jacketed Open Top" using the high quality Barnes projectiles. I call the stuff hollowpoints, but then again I have been known to be a

bit of a barbarian once in awhile. Using the Barnes Reduced Ricochet Low Penetration or RRLP projectile the ICC ammo is very accurate while yet being a lead-free frangible cartridge. The test ammo accuracy was way social function capable. Being produced in .223 Remington, .308 Winchester and 7.62x39 calibers the ammunition covers a very broad spectrum of weapons systems. The Barnes RRLP is an exceptional choice of ammunition if it is to be used for training or duty in urban environments due its lack of deep penetration. This ammunition is exceptional for both private sector personal defense and or law enforcement officers. Good people, good product.

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PRECISION PRO GRIPS

John Taffin

Bob Leskovec of Precision Pro Grips is an artist of the highest order. I grew up reading Elmer Keith and always admired his ivory-stocked single actions and even more so after I got to see, feel, touch and experience them in person. Leskovec was commissioned to carry out a pair of Keith's favorite ivory grips with a carved steerhead in ivory polymer for heavy-duty use. These now reside on a Colt New Frontier .45, and the same pattern was then carried out for a pair of 4-5/8" Ruger .45 Vaqueros with one sixgun carved on the right panel and the matching gun on the left panel. The carved steerhead not only looks great but also provides a non-slip surface for one-handed shooting.

Bob works with several media including exotic woods, the same with silver inlays, stag, when available, and acrylics offered in carved motifs.



This matched pair of S&W .44 Specials (above) with ivory stocks were carved by Bob Lescovic for John in the style preferred by Elmer Keith. The carving (below) provides for a hand-filling hold on what otherwise is a slim factory-style grip.



Leskovec also works in genuine ivory producing plain, carved, scrimshawed, or fancy inlaid grips. He can also copy any of the old-style carved-ivory stocks in genuine ivory or reproduce them in a tougher acrylic that looks much like ivory. Precision Pro has their version of the B-Western imitation stag grip carried out in ivory acrylic with the stag lines carved into the material. They are more eye-pleasing than the plastic imitation stag, less expensive than genuine stag and available now.

I recently acquired serial numbers SH001 and SH002 of the Shootists 20th Anniversary Special Edition USA .44 Special single-action sixguns. One of my favorite B-Western movie stars was Wild Bill Elliott who usually carried a pair of Colt Single Actions butts to the front in a buscadero rig. Leskovec just happens to have the original pattern of the imitation stag grips used by Wild Bill so it seemed fitting to have the .44



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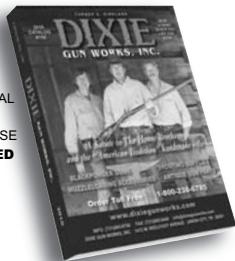
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GG&G MOUNT

Clint Smith

I am lucky enough I am often required to mount and remount different sighting systems to test sights and rifles. Even with all this luck, the act of doing the testing can be a pain sometimes because on some flattop AR rifle platforms, the standard front sight interferes with the sight system being tested. Another point is you're always running around looking for the correct wrench to loosen or tighten the new sight or base to the rifle.

The Arizona based GG&G people have a new sight base cantilever ring mounting system that addresses both of these issues in one fell swoop. Made for the Aimpoint system of scopes (one of my favorite ones as far as battery-powered scopes go), the new GG&G mount has the ability to be taken off and on by hand with a knob to tighten the scope in place. The knob is functional and large enough even I can do it with arthritis and grumpy broke fingers. The scope base also has a built-in insulated spare battery compartment suitable for holding the original small batteries appropriate to the Aimpoint Comp M2 series.



The GG&G mount for the Aimpoint sight is rock solid gear and allows the sight to be quickly mounted or removed.

I took an Aimpoint, mounted it to the new base took it to the range. The scope zeroed up quickly with no problems and, after shooting many rounds though the rifle, I checked everything. Knobs and screws were solid as a bank door. Moving on I mounted an ITT night vision behind the mount and the GG&G Aimpoint mount height was correct to the NVD rig allowing both the NVD and the scope to align and work correctly.

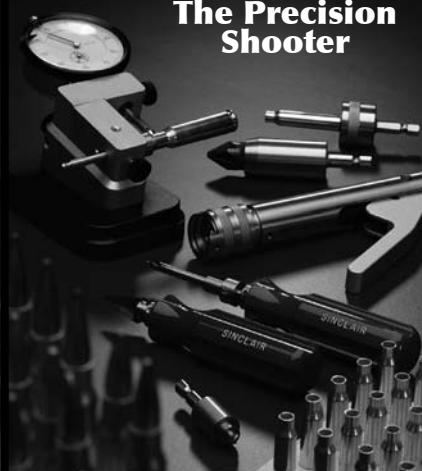
I think the strongest selling point for me for the new GG&G 1014 mount was the ability to take it off quickly by hand should I want or need to remove the scope due to possible failure or damage. If you're an Aimpoint fan you should look into the new GG&G mount. I'm sure liking mine!

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THE RED CHIP BUCK

Young hunters.

I watched the boy glassing the area with my binoculars. He was just tall enough to see out of the blind while standing. It was late afternoon, and my 9-year-old grandson Jory and I had been watching the rolling hills covered with cactus, mesquite, and all sorts of thorn bushes for the past 3 hours.

"Grandpa, there's a big one up on the hill. It just came out with the does." He exclaimed in a hushed tone it'd taken me half an hour to get him to use. At more than 500 yards and with the finger of a lake between the deer and us, it seemed unlikely that we would ever get a shot. As evening drew near and the weather chilled, he put on the old camouflaged coat. He looked so much like his mother. She too had worn that coat many years before while we sat in a similar blind waiting for her first buck ...

The Red Chip Buck

I strained to see through the early morning fog. The opening in the blind afforded a good view, but only enough of first light shone through the gray mist to tease my eyes with eerie shapes.

Next to me sat my 16-year-old daughter, Celine, hunkered into a ball

of down camo jacket, earmuffs, gloves, and knit hat, trying for a little more of the sleep stolen from her in the early hours.

Trying to see through the soupy haze, my eyes strained at a dark gray hump against a gray landscape. A doe. No cause for excitement yet; we were after bigger and better things: the Red Chip Buck.

I looked back at my daughter and thought about our good fortune. I had been invited by Ronnie and Jeff Sizemore to participate in a father and son weekend of whitetail deer hunting on a ranch they leased. I had just finished tuning my wife's 6mm Remington with Nosler's new 85-grain Partition bullets and had decided the rifle would be ideal for Celine.

It was Celine's first deer hunt, and I lectured as we drove toward the ranch. "Yes Dad, I understand. Yes Dad, I'll squeeze slowly. Yes Dad, both eyes open and relax," she replied, humoring me.

We managed to arrive at our destination about 2 PM. It didn't take long for the other hunters to realize there was something slightly different about our father and son duo. My son was a girl and an attractive one at that (no prejudice here). Celine immediately became self-conscious amidst this enclave of male hunters dressed in camouflage from head to toe. She jokingly dubbed the camp "Men's Town," but she was welcomed with genuine encouragement.

We spent the first evening in a blind watching the wildlife. Several does passed by and a flock of about 60 turkeys spent almost half an hour in front of us. Squirrels skittered here and there gathering acorns while they screeched their discontent at our presence.

Our supper that evening was hot and filling. We spent the evening listening to big buck stories around a huge bonfire.

The outfitter, Gene Wilson, a long



Celine's "Red Chip Buck" taken many years prior to her son's shooting a 6mm Remington topped with 85-grain Nosler Partitions.

time hunting guide and famous South Texas pigeon thrower in the old days, has a raspy, thunderous voice. It jarred us awake in the early morning hours long before first light. Toast, jam, juice, and coffee were plentiful. A more substantial brunch would wait.

Jeff entered the dining room holding a number 10 coffee can. As he jiggled the can, we could hear the clickety-clack sound of plastic poker chips. Jeff continued to shake the can as he gave us the weekend's hunting instructions. We were to take only bucks with 6 points or less. Does were allowed as well. However, the lucky person to draw the single Red Chip from the coffee can could shoot any buck seen.

Celine drew third and pulled the Red Chip. I have seen a lot of red poker chips in my day, but none like this. Celine's lucky draw lifted her spirits and mine to the coming events. Gene's authoritative voice broke the moment. "Let's get going," he yelled, "time's wastin'."

A long bumpy ride, and the truck finally began to let hunters off. One little fellow shared a blind with his father and



The "Red Chip Buck" still takes center stage in Celine's parent's dining room.

grandfather. It would be a little cramped, but the spirit of the hunt would be heightened by three generations sharing this adventure.

Finally our turn arrived. We climbed out of the pickup and into the Texas brush, equipment in hand, to stand alone in the silence of an early morning's darkness, wondering just where we were. We watched as the headlights of the truck disappeared over a small knoll and until the lazy hum of the engine faded into the distance. We made our way cautiously through the brush to the blind, stowed our equipment, waiting patiently for the first rays of light to



Jory's first deer. By the time Jacob and he got to the fallen buck, it was dark. The coat Jory is wearing was worn by his mother many years prior when she took her first deer.

cheer the unfriendliness of an unfamiliar place.

No luck. Celine was not allowed to draw for the evening hunt, having already gotten her chance. The young man who drew the red chip that evening didn't connect either.

Next morning, we all assembled outside once more to receive instructions and envy the person who drew the Red Chip for the last time. Jeff ceremoniously passed the can one more time to those who had not yet plucked the red plastic disk from its depths. One youngster about 12 drew a chip after waiting silently for his turn. He stood opened mouth for a moment and then turned his gaze to his father. You could clearly see awe and imagination forming on the boy's face as he raised the red object toward his father in triumph. The Red Chip was gone and all who were eligible had drawn.

Then I saw Jeff look in the can and turn toward my daughter with that beguiling smile of his. "I put one more Red Chip in today. Want to give it a try?"

When he shook the can again, I realized there was more than one chip there. "Come on Celine, get lucky," I thought, as she poked her hand deeply into the can. She opened her hand slowly, and there it was, the Red Chip. And



The traditional cross on the boy's forehead denotes a young hunter's first deer. The cross is made from the buck's blood.

there, too, was that big smile again.

A pleasant chill filled the morning air. The lack of wind made it less cold, but allowed the silvery mist to hang motionless. As I started to look back at Celine sitting next to me in her crouched position, I thought I saw something move at the edge of the brush to the left

An advertisement for ATI gunstocks. The top half features a large image of a rifle with a speaker attached to its barrel, set against a dark, textured background. The word "Quality." is written in a cursive script, and "CONTROL." is in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below the image, the text "Take ATI to the FIELD" is displayed, with the ATI logo (a red shield with white letters) integrated into the letter "A". At the bottom left, there is a "MADE IN THE USA" logo with the American flag and the text "www.ATIgunstocks.com", "ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL", "MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN • 800.925.2522", and "All ATI gunstocks are made with the highest-quality DuPont® glass filled nylon, so you can control any situation." At the very bottom, the website "WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM" is listed.

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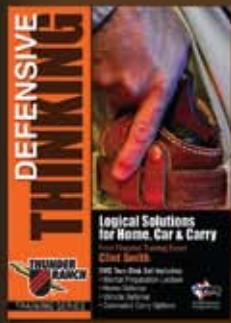


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of the doe. I waited, straining my eyes.

Suddenly, a buck left the cover of the brush and stepped into the clearing. The apparent size of him, moving gray and ghost-like through the fog, shot a load of adrenaline into my system. The glass confirmed it — he was beautiful. I frantically, but quietly, woke up my daughter to shoot.

The buck was standing approximately 125-yards out as she raised the rifle into position noiselessly. The rifle blast broke the silence of the morning. The buck stiffened and bolted into the brush as only a whitetail buck can. Gone.

"I missed him Daddy," she moaned.

"Did the shot go off by surprise?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Was the crosshair near his shoulder when the shot went off?"

"Yes," she replied again.

"Then you hit him." I said with encouragement. "Let's wait here for a few minutes and then go see."

I paced off the distance to the spot where we thought the buck had been. Celine had a disappointed look on her face as we at first saw no sign of a hit. I walked a little to my right and found a small pool of blood. I showed Celine, and as I did both of our eyes followed the ground to the brush line where he had disappeared.

Almost immediately, we spotted the buck laying a little beyond the brush line not more than 20 yards away. He was heavy bodied and carried the most symmetrical set of 8 points I have ever seen. The Nosler had done its job on the buck's quartering position, having penetrated near the front shoulder, continued on through the lungs, and come to rest on the far side of the offside hind quarter. The little 85-grain Partition retained 67 percent of its weight and left no bloodshot meat.

Back at camp, the older hunters were as excited for my daughter as I. She had to undergo the embarrassment of the traditions of a hunter's first buck in South Texas. Gene dipped his thumb in the blood of the big buck and painted a cross on Celine's forehead. Jeff stood by, satisfied with his decision to let Celine draw again, commenting this was the most beautiful buck taken off the ranch to date. I stood by, waiting to see her erupt in some gesture of disgust at this "Men's Town" ritual. But she kept her cool and managed a big smile. After all, amidst all these males at "Men's Town," it was she who had taken the "Red Chip Buck."

Like Mother Like Son

And now it was her son's turn some 12 years later. The minutes and hours droned on and the boy began to get antsy. There were two bucks about 150 yards out, a spike and a little forked horn. To



About the only thing Jory liked about processing the deer was using the water hose to spray them down. Only 9, he hoisted them into position and cleaned them. Not long after we enjoyed their backstraps cooked over an open pit on the beach.

his chagrin, I kept him at bay. I told him to be patient, the big one would come.

As twilight began to fall more deeply upon us, a herd of about 10 feral sows and their young emerged from the dense cover and began rooting and fighting in a clearing about 70 yards from us. He looked at me and his eyebrows advanced upward on his forehead in a gesture of, "How about it Grandpa." The sun was dipping low, and we were not seeing the deer I hoped for. I told him to go ahead. He was trying to situate his rifle as I looked to the rear one last time.

There he was! Coming out of the brush near the spike and the forked horn was Jory's buck. I whispered with desperation to Jory. "Don't shoot, boy! Your buck is right behind you." His eyes showed surprise and anticipation at my exclamation. I took control of the rifle as he carefully made his way to the other side of the blind.

I watched the buck through the binoculars with one eye on Jory. I could see the barrel moving back and forth as he tried to find the buck in the scope. It was a skill he had yet to master. But when the barrel suddenly stopped and was rock solid, I knew he had found his quarry. Suddenly the blind filled with the sound of the report and the buck went down.

The boy was beside himself trying to escape the blind and run to the deer, but I made him wait. It was nearly dark now. I told him we would give the deer a bit of time to stiffen, lowering the possibility of its bolting with its last push of adrenaline as we approached him. Besides, we needed to bring up the car's headlights to perform the rest of the job as last light was fading quickly.

Like his mother many years before, I dipped my thumb in the blood of this fine South Texas whitetail buck and made the traditional cross on my grandson's forehead.

A Red Chip Buck had graced an old man's path once again. As I looked down at the beautiful buck and the smiling face of the boy, I sensed that life was closing for one and beginning for another. **GUNS**

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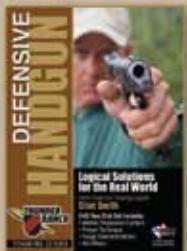
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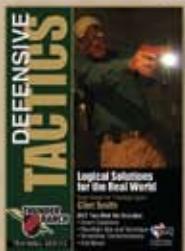
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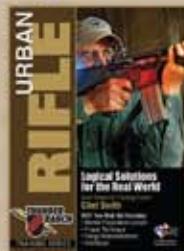
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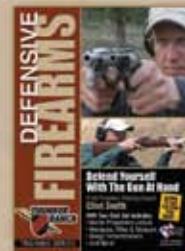
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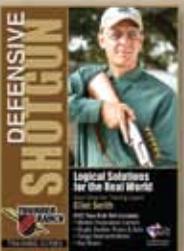
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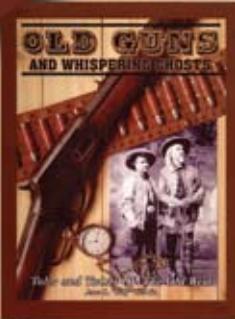
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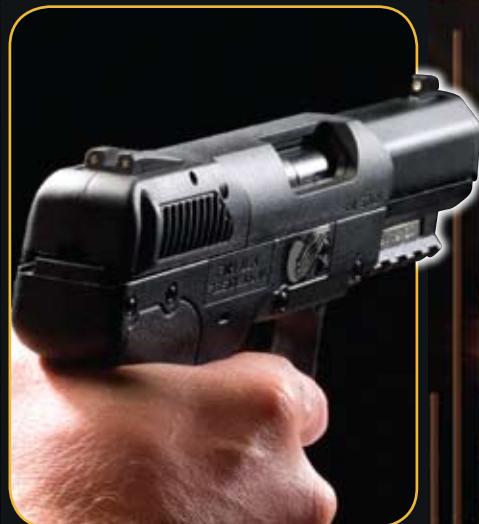


AR34F TACTICAL SAFE FROM BROWNING

The AR34F is the first Tactical gun safe ever, with more than the standard theft and fire protection. The outside is black and textured, with the unique look of overhead and side racking. The inside is specially designed to handle the odd shapes and sizes of tactical guns: shorter length rifles with different shapes, unique optics and unique buttplate-to-magazine-to-muzzle dimensions. Log on to www.browning.com for all of the specifics.

MEN'S OPERATOR GRADE MECHANIC SHIRT FROM EOTAC

The practical and discreet Mechanic shirt is made from pre-shrunk/washed lightweight 5.5 oz all-cotton poplin that's been treated with DuPont Teflon Fabric Protector, making it resistant to stains and fading. It features a straight bottom hem with side vents and it drapes freely, offering maximum concealment. The two false lower front buttons disguise a hook & loop closure for easier, faster access. In black, grey or navy, retail is \$54.99 - \$59.99. Check it out at www.eotac.com or give them a call at (803) 744-9930.



FN FIVE-SEVEN STANDARD FROM FNH USA

FN Five-SeveN Standards come in black matte finish and olive drab green with U.S. made three-dot fixed sights. The guns are chambered in 5.7x28mm and feature textured, ergonomic polymer frame with checkered panels for enhanced grip. It also boasts a reversible magazine release and ambidextrous manual safety levers. MSRP \$1,316.56. Visit www.fnhusa.com for more information.

DOG LIFE JACKET FROM FIDOGEAR

Fidogear's new Dog Life Jacket is constructed with heavy-duty materials and Coast Guard grade UL 1911 floatation foam. The outer shell consists of a durable 1000 Denier highly visible fluorescent orange Cordura with reflective ribbon and black pack cloth base for Fido's comfort. Convenient handle assists with retrieval. Order yours from www.fidogear.com or (877) 343-4327.



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SRT SERIES FROM NCSTAR

This exclusive new series gives you all the great features of the original Mark III Tactical Series (weaver style quick release system, built-in sunshade, and fully multi-coated lenses) but with a unique new feature: a blue illuminated reticle, available in 5 levels of intensity, as well as a fully adjustable red laser for close quarter accuracy. It's offered in a variable power 3-9x42, and a fixed power 4x32 with 3 reticle options of Mil-Dot, P4 Sniper and Rangefinder and is backed by a lifetime limited warranty. For additional info call (626) 575-1518 or email marketing@ncstar.com.



NEW RIFLES FROM MASTERPIECE ARMS

MasterPiece Arms, the nation's only true MAC-10 manufacturer, introduces four models of carbine rifles to their line. MPA1T-A is a .45 cal top-cocking rifle with a 16" threaded barrel. MPA1SST-A is a .45. cal side-cocking rifle with a scope mount and 16" threaded barrel. MPA20T-A is a top-cocking 9mm rifle with a 16" threaded barrel. MPA20SST-A is a side-cocking 9mm rifle with a scope mount and a 16" threaded barrel. MSRP \$529.95 - \$599.95. For more info on these and other MPA products check out www.masterpiecearms.com or call (866) 803-0000.

GAME CLEANING SYSTEM FROM HUNTER'S SPECIALTIES

The new Game Cleaning System from Hunter's Specialties helps hunters quickly field dress deer, antelope, bear, hogs, and other similar sized game. It contains a set of field dressing gloves and the new Butt Out 2 big game field-dressing tool. Also included are an economy

deer field dressing bag to place the animal in after skinning and a pack of Scent-A-Way Field Wipes for quick and easy clean up. MSRP \$17.99. For more info, log onto www.hunterspec.com, write to 6000 Huntington Court NE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402, or call (319) 395-0321.

PISTOL BULLET FEEDER KIT FROM RCBS

Increasing load rate by 50-percent, the Pistol Bullet Feeder Kit is designed to fit on most 7/8"-14 threaded progressive presses and features an 110VAC operated collator unit that orients the bullets to drop into the feed mechanism. MSRP \$495.95. Log on to www.rcbs.com for more info.



YOU CAN



PHOTOS: JOSEPH R. NOVELOZO

S&W-BOLT .270 WITH SIGHTRON SCOPE AND TICHBOURNE KNIFE!

You read about this very rifle in the December issue last year, and now just one of you will win this nifty hunting rifle set up in game-getting Jack O'Connor's favorite round, the .270 Winchester, topped with a Sightron 3-9x42mm SIIB Big Sky

scope. We're sure this combo will help you take big game, so we're tossing in a George Tichbourne Elk Hunter knife. You can't win if you don't enter, so send those post cards in pronto! Don't have a postcard? Go to www.gunsmagazine.com, take the survey and enter online.

GUNS

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in .25-06, .30-06

CAPACITY: 4+1

BARREL LENGTH: 23"

TWIST: 1:10", RH

LENGTH OF PULL: 13 5/8"

DROP AT COMB: 7/8"

DROP AT MONTE CARLO: 1/2"

DROP AT HEEL: 1-1/4"

LENGTH OVERALL: 43"

WEIGHT, EMPTY: 7 pounds

FINISH: Blued

STOCK: Synthetic Realtree AP

PRICE: \$637

VALUE OF PACKAGE: \$1,335.67

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MAGNIFICATION: 3X-9X

OBJECTIVE:

LENS DIAMETER: 42mm

EYE RELIEF: 4.1" (3X), 3.9" (9X)

CLICK VALUE: 1/4 MOA

OVERALL LENGTH: 12.6"

TUBE DIAMETER: 1"

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Limit one entry per household.

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ODD ANGRY SHOT

• JOHN CONNOR •

IT'S NOT ABOUT PRODUCTS It's about people.



Throughout my working life as a Marine, a metro cop, a professional soldier and a "contracted representative of US and Western interests," I've enjoyed two great advantages: First, the honor of working with highly principled and proficient warriors, and second — I never had to worry about employment. Demand for my services was dependent on man's continuing proclivity for committing evil acts, and the need to stop them. And evil has always been a "growth industry."

Now, in my bent, busted, gnarled an' mutilated state, it seems what used to be a sideshow in the carnival of my life — this "scribbling for monies" thing — might move under the Big Tent. I'll have to rely a lot on the health and morale of the shooting industry. And that industry is lookin' pretty rocky and glum.

The big gunmakers are furiously pumpin' out backordered guns and making big bucks, but their brows seem furrowed with fear our hip-cool-edgy Hopie-Changie Euro-Socialist government might put 'em outta business, if not into gulags. Their only consolation might be that the more guns they sell now, the less the chance us boo-zhwahs (I like that better than "bourgeoisies") will wind up slurpin' pumpkin soup an' munchin' moldy bread in labor camps.

Since last November's elections, the balance of bucks spent across the shooting industry has shifted mightily from a broad spectrum of products to

a narrowed venue: guns and ammo — mostly ARs and AKs, high-capacity pistols, serious centerfire rifles, and prime fodder for 'em — almost starving a lot of small "accessory and implement" outfits.

Now, I can't worry about everybody in the industry — at least the Big Boys have some bankrolls — but I am very concerned about the Little Guys, especially the ones I call "friend." And I'll tell you this: the ratio of Genuine Good Guys to Bilious Butheads in the shooting industry is the highest I've ever found in *any* organization or endeavor. Right now, many GGG's are finding it difficult to keep their doors open and the lights on ...

Only Askin' A Little Favor

I'm not gonna give you a sales job, but I ask this: I'm going to list some really good people who make high-quality products, and request if you're

going to spend some shekels anyway, please consider them during this economically-troubled time — OK? Here we go:

Joe Quinlan is a hard-working, honest cop in the South, which means he's in no real danger of becoming wealthy. Trying to build a better life for his pretty wife and knee-high kids, he started up *Zombie Targets*, providing the most fun you can have punchin' paper with lead. They're outrageously different, tacti-cool, and even subtly scored consistent with standard silhouette targets. You can prepare for the inevitable *Zombie Wars* and help a Good Guy out by visiting www.zombietargets.net.

Jerry Dean, former Marine and dedicated gunner, is the solo stitcher-and-cutter of high quality thoughtfully designed web gear like the "Grab'N'Go" rig pictured in our August '09 issue. Jerry's work is light, tough and precise, handmade at or below mass-production prices. You might find something you like at www.olongapooutfitters.com — I have — and you can also feed him your own design ideas, which he might render into reality for you. I've done that too, and he's workin' on a couple of "Connor Combat" designs for me.

Steve and Kate Camp are both the "mental and the muscle" behind *Safe Direction* products — an invaluable

idea which hasn't made 'em rich — though it should. Every home containing a gun; every police station and cruiser; every range and gun shop should have one of their bullet-stopping accidental-discharge defeating, life-saving products. Steve, the rifleman, and Kate, the pistolera of the family, both care passionately about firearm safety, not because it sells so well — it's a surprisingly hard sell to the "unshot" — but because they're *good people*. See their stuff at www.safedirection.com.

Joseph Kiser has three driving forces in his worklife: Shooting, absolute dead-bang precision machining, and brutally strong, virtually bombproof products. At this point he makes only two items, but he makes 'em beautiful and *tough*. One is a fixed, superstrong non-collapsing aperture rear sight for flattop AR's and clones. A scad of SWAT troops complained their rough activities were breaking folding sights and wanted something they could drive nails with. Joseph gave it to 'em.

His *MultiMount* is a slick rail-mount for the Aimpoint CompM4 and the Aimpoint 3X Magnifier — one compact mounting solution which retains both optics securely, and allows for rapid attachment or removal of the magnifier with highly precise return to zero. Read more about it at www.kisermunitions.com.



The AccuScope system saves time, ammo and embarrassment sighting in rifle scopes.

com. I want to see what's next from this guy, so help him stay in business, OK?

More Great Gear & Genuine Good Guys

Jerry Evans is a disability-retired cop who, at the time of his career-ending back injuries, had already gotten hooked on leatherwork, but never had time to do much with it. Over the years since, he has become, in my opinion, one of the greatest artist-craftsmen who ever stitched a hide into a holster. The fit of

his work — sliding a pistol into one of his hand-formed holsters — is like closing the door of a new Mercedes sedan, and finish is simply superb. The best part? His prices are about the same or less than high-end factory holsters, pouches and belts.

Jerry's the guy you call when nobody offers the holster you want for your unusual roscoe, or you've been battin' around an idea for a concealment rig, or you're looking for a gift rig in something exotic like black shark or python (www.haugenhandgunleather.com.)

Steve Ugolini is simply one of the nicest guys you'd ever meet. Utterly devoted to his big extended family, he's the one who makes sure Great-Aunt Emily gets to the doctor and two jars of his wife's butter pickles are mailed to that gunwriter who he met and shook hands with once. He's a hard-working, smart engineer who figured out the best system I've ever seen for rapidly, precisely zeroing a scope on target.

I'm almost outta word-count here, so go to www.accuscopeusa.com and you'll see how easy it is to use, OK?

Well, dang; still had more to list, but I'll end with this: We're all in this together, folks, so any business you "keep in the family" will help keep us all healthy, happy — and FREE. Connor OUT.

GUNS

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MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2009

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The .44 Special goes all the way back to the closing days of 1907 with Smith & Wesson bringing out their first large-framed, swing out-cylindered, double-action revolver. It bore several names, New Century, Model of 1908, 1st Model Hand Ejector, however it is more fondly known as the Triple-Lock. Smith & Wesson's first .44 Special was built to showcase the talents of the Smith & Wesson engineers and gunsmiths. The name Triple-Lock came from the fact the cylinder locked in three places, the back of the cylinder, the front of the ejector rod, and a beautifully machined third locking feature at the front of the cylinder. This was only the first of many .44 Specials to come. Next came the 2nd Model in 1915, the 3rd Model in 1926, and then the above mentioned 1950 Target. Not in my wildest dreams did I ever envision having one of these great .44 Specials, let alone examples of all four. The last two are my favorites.

Almost from the very beginning there has been a mystique surrounding the .44 Special. The person most responsible for sparking it and sustaining it at least from the 1920s through the 1950s was, of course, Elmer Keith. However, when the .44 Magnum arrived Keith retired all of his .44 Specials most of which are now on display in the Elmer Keith Museum in the Boise, Idaho, Cabela's. Skeeter Skelton traded in his .44 Special for a .44 Magnum and then realized he had made a mistake. He decided the lighter, trimmer S&W .44 Special was a much better choice for an everyday working sixgun. By the late 1960s the .44 Special was basically dead as both Colt and Smith & Wesson had dropped it. In the 1970s Skeeter single-handedly revived the .44 Special by first writing of converting the Ruger .357 Flattop Blackhawk and Smith & Wesson Highway Patrolman to .44 Special and then went on to convince both Colt and Smith & Wesson to bring it back. They did but not for long. Smith & Wesson made two runs of .44 Specials in the 1980s, the Model 24-3 and its stainless steel counterpart, the Model 624.

Skeeter died in 1988 and I have been doing everything I could for the past two decades to maintain a lively interest in the .44 Special. I have had several Ruger Flattops and Old Models converted to .44 Special by custom sixgunsmiths and have written about them as often as possible. I have also experienced, and

shared that experience of .44 Specials from Colt, Great Western, USFA, and Freedom Arms. I've also been able to cover a full century of the Smith & Wesson .44 Specials through the four Hand Ejector Models, the Models 24-3 and 624, and the recent resurrections, the Thunder Ranch Special and the newest, the Classic Model 24. A man simply cannot have too many .44 Specials.

Mention was made of the Heavy .44 Special Keith Load using a 250-grain hardcast bullet over 17.0 grains of 2400. This load clocks out of a 7-1/2" barrel at 1,200 fps so it is definitely in the heavy class. There was a time this was all I used, however it is now used very sparingly. Brett Olin of the Speer



Single actions do not come any better than these 5-1/2" .44 Specials (left to right) including a Colt New Frontier, custom heavy barrel Ruger by Andy Horvath, and custom octagon barrel Ruger by Alan Harton. Stocks are by Nutmeg Sports, Roy Fishpaw, and Alan Harton.

Ballistics Lab has tested this load and it comes out at just under 25,000 psi, so each individual sixgunner will have to decide for themselves if they want to use this load in their particular sixgun. Two things to remember: use standard primers, and cut the load approximately 6 percent when using today's 2400. Brett got 1,102 fps from a 4" barreled S&W with the older 2400 and with 16.0 grains of current production 2400 I get 1,129 fps from a 4-5/8" barreled Ruger conversion. I do keep several boxes on hand for hunting.

Every .44 Special connoisseur knows what is meant by the Keith Load and the Skeeter Skelton Load. I got the latter from Skeeter and he got it from Elmer. It uses the same Keith bullet but over 7.5 grains of Unique. Depending upon barrel length this load is right at 950 fps and can also be duplicated with the same charge of Universal or 8.0 grains of Power Pistol. It does just about everything I need an everyday working sixgun to do. More in depth information on these .44 Specials as well as many others I have experienced can be found covered in a major portion of *The Gun Digest Book of the .44* by yours truly.

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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

A HALF CENTURY WITH SIXGUNS The .44 Special.

The year was 1950. I had spent the days between Christmas and New Year's at my cousin's house and returned home the afternoon of January 1 to find my family had moved. Actually they had told me they were moving, and I was overjoyed to now actually have a bedroom of my own. The house was small, we were what would be called low income today, however none of that mattered. We certainly had all the important things. After the war we had moved into a housing project built especially for returning veterans and now we not only actually had a house, it was backed up to a small wooded area. I would spend my most important growing up years here.

1950 was much more important for something else that happened: Smith & Wesson introduced the 1950 Target .44 Special. At that time, of course, I was too young to know anything about any of this, but I would find out within a few years. With the coming of *Sixguns* by Keith in 1955 I soon learned all about the .44 Special. Even though the 1950 Target arrived, at least officially, approximately six years before the .44 Magnum, I would see the latter long before I ever saw the former. Until the late 1950s the only .44 Special I had ever seen belonged to an older neighbor. His old Colt Single Action had been converted to a 7-1/2" .44 Special with a new barrel and cylinder and the grip frame had been swapped out for one from an 1860 Army. I thought it was just about the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen.

At Last

After graduating from high school in 1956 and going to work I started

gathering my personal collection of firearms. First came a Marlin .22, then a Ruger .22 Single-Six, both great starting guns. They were soon followed by a pre-war Colt SAA .38-40, a Ruger



Great .44 Specials from Smith & Wesson include (top left counter clockwise) Model 1926, 1950 Target, and Model 24-3. Ivory stocks by Bob Lescovic.

.357 Blackhawk, one of the new Colt SAAs chambered in .45 Colt, a S&W .357 Highway Patrolman, even a Ruger .44 Magnum Blackhawk, however no .44 Special was to be found. This is not unusual as the Special has always been

in short supply. Actually I would not see my first one until my wife presented me with a bright blue 6-1/2" 1950 Target for Christmas in 1959. I already had loading dies for the .44 Magnum as well as a mold for the Keith 429421 bullet. However, I made the same mistake as I had for the .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum; that is everything was loaded to the hilt.

All my loads for the .44 Special in the early 1960s were assembled with the 250-grain Keith bullet over 17.0 grains of 2400. It would be quite awhile before I would discover the real joy of the .44 Special was not always found in shooting this heavy load. One year can make an awful lot of difference. For Christmas 1959 it was just the two of us and we had plenty of money to spend. One year later, I had started college, was laid off for the winter, we had our first baby due any day, and we had a grand total of \$6.66 to spend for Christmas. We split the money in half and instead of another sixgun I got a bottle of Hoppe's 9 and some cleaning patches. But at least I still had my .44 Special not realizing it would be not for long.

Two years later we had three young babies, all which liked to eat regularly, and I also needed to get money together for tuition. We had no other choice — the .44 Special as well as two other guns had to be sold. I knew if I dropped out of school it would be difficult to start up again and we definitely had to take care of our kids, so the guns went. I'll never forget the look on Dot's face with tears streaming from her eyes as we left the gunshop; she looked up at me and said: "You will never have to ever, ever do that again!" She was right. Not only have we never had to do it again, but that .44 Special has been replaced many times over.

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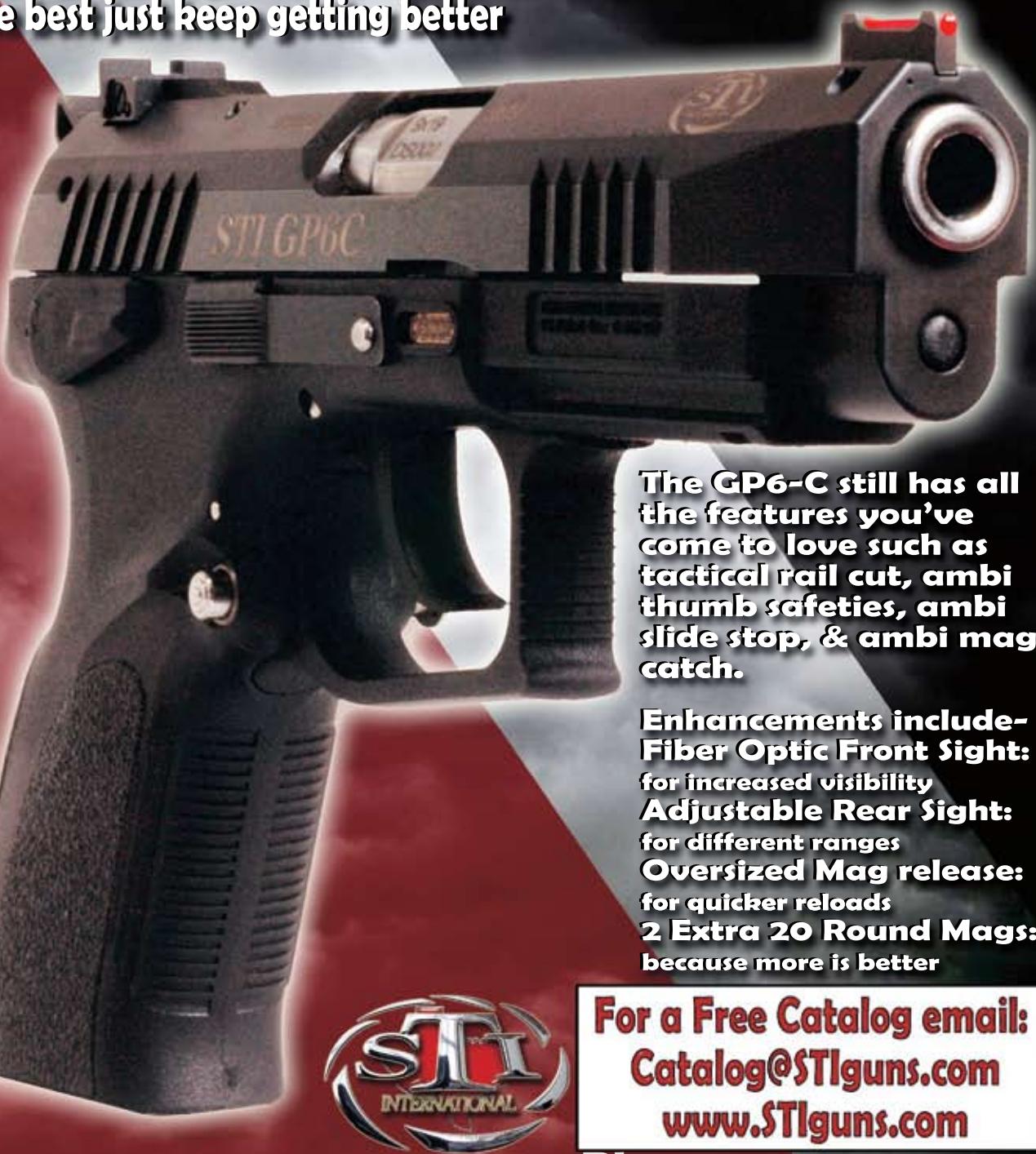
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